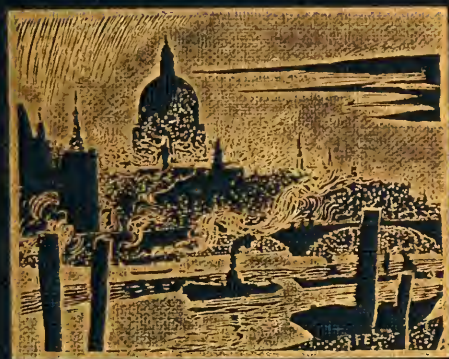


# A LONDONER'S LONDON

WILFRED WHITTEN



## WILFRED WHITTEN

Rev. J. A. L. Hardcastle writes :—

In reading the sympathetic tribute to Wilfred Whitten in your last week's issue I confess to have been surprised that no reference was made to his book "A Londoner's London." Published some

thirty years ago by Messrs. Methuen, it surely must have been encouraged and appreciated by his friend E. V. Lucas. It was nevertheless quite different from the "Wanderer" and its sequels; and in my humble opinion surpasses any other of its kind. For it not only recalls and causes to live for us the literary ghosts, the eccentrics and the artists of the past, and especially, of course, of the early nineteenth century—no mean but no unusual an achievement; it also gives us the atmosphere of the London just before the Great War, then—as now—in spite of a far greater and baser devastation, haunted by such citizens and saturated by their personalities.

"John o' London" had no merely antiquarian nose: his ready pen was not that of a reconstructive gossip-writer; his was a mysterious chemistry through which this London atmosphere was both distilled and inhaled. He was especially happy in his chapter-titles and summaries: what more perfect one for dealing with the Strand than "The Street of the Sagging Purpose"; and its opening description is masterly. Or again, has Bloomsbury been ever better epitomized than as "Lords and Landladies"? Cheapside is humanized as the "Street of Songs and Sixpences." But perhaps it is the purlieus and the by-ways, vanished or persistent, the congeries and the oases which he describes most vividly, even caressingly, yet never sentimentally. At times his style rises to sheer beauty, as in his climax. It is indeed a book to be sought out, for its own intrinsic merit and for the beautiful illustrations by Mr. Frank L. Emanuel; surely no other artist, except perhaps Mr. Sydney R. Jones, has ever captured London's streaming streets and backwaters so well.







**A LONDONER'S LONDON**





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### THE RISING SUN TAVERN AND BOOKSELLERS' ROW

HOW GOOD WAS THE OLD RISING SUN TAVERN, CHEEK BY JOWL WITH A BOOKSELLER'S FOUR-STORIED HOUSE, WITH ITS WOODEN GALLERY ATOP, AND ITS OVERHANGING SIDE IN HOLYWELL STREET WHERE YOU FORESAW GOOD DELAYS (P. 9)

# A LONDONER'S LONDON

BY

WILFRED WHITTEN

*("John o' London")*

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
FRANK L. EMANUEL

METHUEN & CO. LTD.  
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TO  
T. P. O'CONNOR





## PREFACE

A WRITER of whom the first John Murray demanded a preface demurred to writing one. A preface, he said, always put him in mind of Hamlet's exclamation to the tardy player, "Leave thy damnable faces, and begin!" I delay to begin only to explain that the London of these pages is not the measureless town of the guide-books: that London on which a hundred and fifty years ago Horace Walpole began a book, only to faint and fail: that London which, still earlier, had been called a county covered with houses, a description which has passed from metaphor to fact. The Londoner's true London is smaller. It is the sum of his own tracks in the maze, the town in which, by hap, he has most often eaten his bread and thought his thoughts. Samuel Butler remarks in his published note-books that he was more in Fetter Lane than in any other street of London, and that Lincoln's Inn Fields, the British Museum, the Strand, Fleet Street, and the Embankment came next. This is a very small London, to which my own adds the City, the northern suburbs, and those more national regions of Westminster and the Parks which may be called Everyman's. Although

the reader's intimacies and my own will not be identical, they will generously overlap. In Chancery Lane, in the Euston Road, in Rotherhithe, or east of St. Paul's, we may have few common memories, but we may find these in the Strand, in Regent Street, in Bloomsbury, or merry Islington.

While my limiting clue has been some sort of preference or eager frequenting, I have not tried to exhaust the associations of any street or district, being satisfied to follow those great scribes who, when their subject overflowed, passed on with the useful remark that all the rest is in the book of Jasher, or in the book of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies.

W. W.

THE COCK TAVERN, FLEET STREET

31 *December*, 1912

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# A LONDONER'S LONDON

## CHAPTER I

### THE VEILS OF YESTERDAY

The Passing of Temple Bar—London in 1886—The Bearskins—Old Holborn—John Grey's Cider Cellar—Feudal Bloomsbury—Halfpenny Hatches—The Wind on the Heath—The "Bull and Bush"—Booksellers' Row—The Knife-board—The Lost Wobble—The Dignity of Carts—Leviathan in London—The Evolution of the Hansom—The Exit of Cockneyism—Rural Retreats—"I don't like London"—A Fogey's Regrets—The Advance of Bricks—How London Grows—A Suburban Highway—The Street that Was—Gipsy Hill—The Cult of Escape—The Love of London—Mr. Roker's Dear Eyes—The Spell of London

"**H**OW many times have you walked under Temple Bar?" I asked my old friend Hewson.

We were strolling up Fleet Street, after an evening at the Palaver Club. The discussion, on an economic subject, had dragged a little, and we expanded to the air and lights. My question was abrupt, but Hewson was always ready to recall a London older than mine, in these homeward talks, nevermore possible.

"Thousands of times!" He paused, and added in his excogitative way, "Do you realize that a couple of hours ago you could not have asked me that question?"

"Why not?"

"Because one cannot talk at large in Fleet Street before eight in the evening. Imagine yourself asking me in the luncheon crowd, 'How many times have you walked under Temple Bar?' I should have snapped or swerved, or nodded to another fellow. Dr. Johnson himself could not now talk in Fleet Street until night is come, and the people's elbow gone. That is how London alters. Would any man say to another in the luncheon-hour, 'Fleet Street, in my mind, is more delightful than Tempe,' or anything in the least like it?"

"That remark was made on a Sunday," I reminded my friend.

"Precisely; after church, when Fleet Street was as quiet as it is now. Tempe and Mull! I can see the old engravings of Temple Bar, with a lonesome girl carrying a basket on her head, and one high-wheeled hackney-coach standing like a rock half-way down there to Ludgate."

"Oh, the engravers made every street a wilderness. The Doctor had to forge his way through crowds. You remember that he and Boswell once had to step into Falcon Court only to say 'How d'ye do.' There is the place, opposite, next the map shop. But tell me, you knew the old Bar well?"

"Like a brother. And I saw it destroyed."

"Well, and did you weep when it went? You know Lamb wept when they took down St. Dunstan's clock."

"No. There was the spectacle. That was fine. The men worked night and day, and one night—it must have been in the winter of eighteen-seventy-seven—or eight—I was walking home at about twelve when I came on the scene. There was some fog, and upon my word the old gateway looked like a sacrificial

altar, all aflame with huge gas-jets in a maze of timbers and scaffolding. Men crept about it like bees. I remember the bleached statues of Charles I and Charles II and the rest of them peeping out, like your Lamb's party in a parlour, all silent and all damned. I stood there half an hour, fascinated by this Titan assault on Time in the dead of night."

"Good Heavens ! And did Londoners come to see the last of it ?"

"Well, not as they went to see the last of Jumbo. But they had a big feeling for Temple Bar. I remember that on the night of the illuminations for the marriage of the Prince of Wales the crowds poured through it for hours and hours, and never ceased to ply the old iron knocker on the doors ; there was thunder in the arch all night."

I do not remember whether I told Hewson that I had been in time to walk under Temple Bar. That was in the Seventies, in a boyish scamper through London, and the memory gives me a singular assurance that I have seen an older town. Indeed, Temple Bar seems now to be more than a vanished object of Fleet Street ; I see it rising in time rather than in space, a shadowy postern where the old London centuries chafed to be released into the light of modern day. When I returned to London, to be of it as well as in it, Temple Bar had vanished and its numbered stones were lying in Farringdon Street.

That was in 1886. Life is long. Thousands of children who were then in the Park perambulators are now married and formidable. The young crowd of London is a new crowd, and the town has come up like the tide. How different was the whole savour of the London into which I stole only twenty-

six years ago. Queen Victoria had hardly reached old age, and the Victorian era had not seen itself in the Jubilee mirror. Any day, in some quiet street, one might be face to face with William Ewart Gladstone whom to meet was like—

Vassalage at unawares, encountering the eye  
Of majesty.

I cannot walk down Whitehall without missing the sentries who, in 1886, had not been removed from the doors of the Government offices. On Sundays the Foot Guards walked out in their bearskins, and you saw a hirsute giant going to the Park with a diminutive Jill from a Pont Street kitchen. In the dusk of the evening the broad path from the Serpentine to the Marble Arch was one sinuous blackness, and I see still the skyline of the tumultuous procession plumed by those bulbous head-pieces that swayed against the pale-green sky. In the late Eighties there was a vestige of courage in taking the Victoria Embankment by night, or walking through the Seven Dials. There was no Charing Cross Road to air St. Giles's, and no railway to bisect St. John's Wood. The sign of the Bull and Mouth Tavern, facing St. Martin's-le-Grand, still reminded pale Londoners how

Milo, the Cretonian,  
An ox slew with his fist,  
And ate it up at one meal,  
Ye gods, what a glorious twist!

In Holborn you might walk through the square carriage-way of Furnival's Inn, under which Dickens passed in the flush of his youth to sign his contract for the *Pickwick Papers*. Next to Furnival's Inn

stood, or staggered, an inn that Dickens must have loved. Passing it, you saw pewter candlesticks ; on entering, you were served with port negus by a waiter in lineaments and dignity the double of Mr. Speaker Peel. It was to this old inn, Ridler's, or the "Bell and Crown," that Tom Hood's ruralizing Cockney had sent back his longing thoughts from Porkington Place. Hood had some warrant for his portrait of a Londoner, wistful of Holborn among dairy delights. For under Furnival's Inn—not the building one knew, but its immediate predecessor—there had been a cider vault kept by one John Grey. This man, after years of attendance on his customers, had made a decent fortune, and was able to buy an estate in Yorkshire, to which he retired. But the clatter of hoofs in Holborn was ever in his ears ; and finally, he returned to London and endeavoured to buy back his old cellar. Failing in this, he offered to be a waiter where he had formerly been master ; he was accepted, and drew a salary to the day of his death.

No single street has shed more antiquity than Holborn : its cheery "Bell" and "Black Bull" are dust. Then came a gap from which clouds of engine smoke rolled across the traffic. A shaft of the "Tube" railway was being sunk in Fulwood's Rents, on the site of Squire's Coffee House where Sir Roger de Coverley had smoked his pipe. The name of Fulwood's Rents is not lost, though critics no longer meet there to "make an end of the Nature of the Sublime."

Among the symbols of this paradoxically remote London, few are more vivid, or more incredible, than the Bloomsbury bars, kept by ducal watchmen in gold-laced hats, who admitted or repelled hansom cabs as they pleased. They were a relic of the feudal barriers which had vexed Londoners for generations.



Particularly they recalled the hatches which were common in the eighteenth century. These were usually footpaths over private ground, or new neighbourhoods, whose owners took a halfpenny from the strolling Cockney. The last of them gave access from the Old Kent Road towards London Bridge. In Lambeth, behind St. John the Evangelist's Church in the Waterloo Road, there is still a place called Hatch Row in the midst of squalid old cottage property. I have found that the people of the neighbourhood constantly speak of Palmer Street as "up the Hatch," not knowing, most of them, that the name perpetuates the memory of Curtis's Hatch, which led across the nursery-grounds of Curtis, the nurseryman and botanist—an interesting man, whose own name ought to have been preserved in the street nomenclature of this district. No halfpennies were levied in Bloomsbury, but at the pointing of the ducal finger your hansom cab turned in an eddy of objurgation.

In 1886 Hampstead Heath was the beginning of the country, it has now no claim to be the end of the town. Itself a "garden city," it is being encircled by jerry-built suburbs and planetary tram-cars. I knew Parliament Hill as a place of hedges and haymaking and trespass-boards. Now it is a park—an open one—but still a park, and the boys who play cricket on it were not born when I walked over its solitudes on moonlight nights, gazing at the far-off silvered dome of St. Paul's. Hampstead was still a place of pilgrimage and remoteness, the place where Constable's eye loved to watch a rain-cloud pass over fir and gorse. I remember a little row of cottages that stood opposite the "Bull and Bush." Their gardens sloped gently to the road; almost I recover the scent of their





THE OLD BELL INN, HOLBORN

NO STREET HAS SHED MORE ANTIQUITY THAN HOLBORN: ITS CHEERY "BELL" AND "BLACK BULL" ARE DUST (P. 5)



mignonette and sweet-william. But those cottages are razed, their gardens are a weedy mound ; gone are the tea-tables on which cut flowers were placed in jars, though they grew on every hand. It was a coign of vantage, whence could be seen the small stir of the inn. Up and down the lane the voices—not too many—came and retreated, a bicycle bell tinkled, a party of girls on horseback trotted out of the shadows, everywhere the sunshine danced, and then the strains of a vagrant harp would seek the sky. To sit there and be meditative ; to finger a pocket Horace, and murmur, with the precocious melancholy of youth,

Achilles perished in his prime,  
Tithon was worn away by time,

or some other pensive exclamation of the Sabine, was to envisage London through distance and poetry.

One was conscious of a certain homogeneous mildness in the associations of Hampstead, an orthodoxy that recalled the family bookcase in some far and fragrant corner of England. Church Row wore its inviolate garment of old red brick and straight shallow windows, as when Mrs. Barbauld produced there the books which our grandparents found so "suitable" on Sunday afternoons, and that "Address to Life" which smoothed their paths to the grave. And there lived her niece, Lucy Aikin, whose memoirs of Addison were caressed by Macaulay ; and John Day of "Sandford and Merton," that prop of the middle-class nursery. Hard by Joanna Baillie lived and wrote in silken state, and received Sir Walter Scott, and heard Crabbe try over his latest lines. In that skyey retreat, where Mr. H. G. Wells now hoists the social

weather cone, Dr. Beddoes prescribed for literary ladies the inhaling of the breath of cows, and induced Ann Veronica's great-grandmother to sleep with a cow standing all night with its head between her bed-curtains.

At Hampstead, now and then, Wordsworth had strolled the heath in large discourse with Haydon. Even then the village was old, and its venerables venerated the cottage in which Johnson had written his "Vanity of Human Wishes"; or reminded each other that Steele and Gay and Arbuthnot had climbed to the hill-village as to a green promontory overlooking London's yeasty waves. While they recalled these Augustan shades, Keats was poising his frail figure to hear the nightingale. Ruskin was to come, and Dickens, and Du Maurier, and Wilkie Collins, who called Hampstead "an amiable, elevated lubberland, affording to London the example of a kind of suburban Nirvana." It is still amiable and elevated, but for Nirvana we must look farther than to a suburb whose inhabitants are pelleted from the theatres in a tube. From the high Heath you still see England on one side and her capital on the other, but the gipsy girl no longer rises like a flame from the gorse; the artist comes less often to set his easel in the sand, and the philosopher to pursue the theory of tittle-bats.

While we grow older the London we knew disappears, and at double speed we are separated from streets where we remember to have stood in leisure. It was on a drizzling autumn evening in 1901 that Booksellers' Row was closed for ever. No Londoner who had haunted the street could consent to its going. The lane was mediaeval in its shapes and contour, and nothing like it is left. It led from one island church to another; a white church-tower topped the buildings

either way. The little cavernous shops, glowing with books, did not presume to draw you from your direct eastward or westward path ; they offered you a warm side-passage where you could absorb a few titles, accept a provocation to thought, and regain the larger air of the Strand—or you could finger and buy. How good was the butt-end that faced you from the Law Courts ; the old Rising Sun Tavern, cheek by jowl with a bookseller's four-storied house, with its wooden gallery atop, and its overhanging side in Holywell Street, where you foresaw those good delays.

The street imposed a gait. If you hurried you might knock over one of the gilt-framed old portraits or landscapes propped outside Wheeler's picture shop. Dead to books was the man who could pass Ridler's without reviewing his regiment of folio histories and topographies, his sheepskin classics, and the shelf of cropped Elzevirs in the doorway. Mr. Hindley, himself a maker of books, was to be seen next door, his "Cries of London" and "Life and Times of James Catnach" in the foreground. So you came in the course of time to the modern banquet of Denny at the south-west corner by St. Mary's. What shilling shockers, what sixpenny budgets of humour, threepenny paper classics, astrologies, graphologies ! Good old, hospitable, not quite reputable street, whose Crescent Moon is now museum lumber, whose beckoning glow is lost in municipal day-shine, I doubt if we had a right to pull you down. You should be there still—in the arms of Aldwych.

Twenty-five years ago one mounted a knife-board bus every morning. At many a "Head" or "Arms," well within the four-mile radius, conductors cried, "London, London"—a little to my displeasure. It sounded vast and atmospheric, but was I not, then,

in London? Then came the garden-seat, and facetious leading articles on its social bearings. Then, tickets. I think it was on Sunday, 14 May, 1901, that London began to be strewn with omnibus paper, and my recollection is that a little snow fell in sympathy. How the motor-omnibus came, let historians tell in due season.

The horse-omnibus was pronounced by a great authority to be "probably the lightest and strongest vehicle in the world for carrying twenty-eight people at a speed of nearly eight miles an hour." To-day there are hardly twenty-eight people left in London who are content to travel so slowly, and for most Londoners the fine digestive wobble of the horse-omnibus is already a lost sensation. It is the wobble we miss—that hint of majestic delirium which permitted a fair woman to smile to you ever so suppliantly as the bus swung round Waterloo Place. The motor-omnibus does not wobble, it leans; but leaning is too long a trial, and though under it the eye of woman dilates, it does not respond as in the wobble's divine recoveries.

Posterity will discover that in the year 1912 the newspapers were full of the perils which the motor-omnibus has brought into streets too narrow for its unwieldy gyrations. This is one of those disorders which seem to be always overtaking London. In 1634 Sir William Davenant wrote: "Sure your ancestors contrived your narrow streets in the days of wheel-barrows, before those greater engines, carts, were invented." Carts had then choked the streets, and Davenant found that a coach-ride was a dubious proposition "till the quarrel be decided whether six of your nobles, sitting together, shall stop and give way to as many barrels of beer. Your city is the only



metropolis in Europe where there is wonderful dignity given to carts."

To-day the "wonderful dignity" is grudgingly given to the motor-omnibus, a vehicle almost twice the size of the one it has superseded within ten years. The horse-omnibus was proportioned to the stress of the street, and it had a genial dignity which is absent from its successor. Thus periodically we are brought back to conditions which are antique and barbarous. Goldsmith's Chinaman might write to-day, as he did more than a hundred and fifty years ago: "Heavy-laden machines, with wheels of unwieldy thickness, crowd up every passage; so that a stranger, instead of finding time for observation, is often happy if he has time to escape from being crushed to pieces."

Observation is denied to the man on the motor-bus, as to the wretch under it. The horse-omnibus was full of interest and amenity. You exchanged town wisdom with the driver, watching the dark dance of the manes below. The give-and-take of the street was possible. The motor-vehicle's furore of arriving kills observation. Nor would Mr. Howells write now of its passengers: "They are no longer ordinary or less than ordinary men and women bent on the shabby businesses that preoccupy the most of us; they are conquering princes, making a progress in a long triumph and looking down upon a lower order of human beings from their wobbling steps." For the height and high rail of the new vehicle make the riders look small; they are alienated from the meek crowd below, who wince and pass. "Canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook?"—or a look? Nor less prophetically is it written, "One is so near to another that no air can come between them. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire

leap out. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood."

Nearly ended, too, is the seventy years' reign of the vernacular vehicle which bears the surname of its inventor, Joseph Aloysius Hansom. No one would have thought, in 1833, of calling his creation the gondola of London. It rather resembled a tumbril for taking calves to market, so nearly its body touched the ground and so high its wheels. Even so it was not the most fantastic vehicle offered to London. In various models the door was placed in front, at the side, and at the back. Hansom himself experimented with a vehicle which the passenger was to enter *through the wheels*, but this alarming dream was not fulfilled. That big-bodied, big-brained artist, John Varley, who painted, astrologized, and believed in the ghost of a flea, was attracted by the problem, and after much study he evolved a cab with eight wheels. In the first trial it nearly cut short the career of his capitalist, who was a nervous man. "Never no more, Mr. Varley; never no more! Ten minutes in the thing has all but shaken the life out of me; ten more would quite finish me. Never no more, thank you, John." Only London's wit and social attrition shaped Hansom's vehicle to the lines that Whistler loved, and made it the artist's hieroglyphic of the streets. Novelists found in the hansom a valuable property of fiction, placing their lovers behind its melodiously clanging apron, or attaching some mystery of crime to its stealthy binocular glide through London's night. So, in Stevenson's story, London is scoured by mysterious cabmen in search of those "single gentlemen in evening dress," from whom Mr. Morris was to select the few and fit to witness Prince Florizel's vengeance on the President of the Suicide Club.



To-day the hansom hovers between two worlds: it is still in the streets, yet taking antiquity by the forelock it has entered the London Museum.

The change of changes in the last twenty years has been the decline—say rather the exit—of Cockneyism. Let us look back to 1800. The town which for centuries had solidified within sound of Bow Bells then showed signs of incandescence. But the process was ridiculed. The rhymester and the caricaturist found their butt in the snug citizen who began to keep a country box at Islington or Camberwell, to which on a Sunday he brought his family in a chaise, swelling with pride at the rococo beauties of a dusty garden. The caricaturists—Bunbury, Gillray, Deighton, Woodward, and Rowlandson—all poked fun at the roving citizen and his ideas of landscape gardening; and what they said in caricature the poets repeated in satire. Even Cowper saw little but absurdity in the demand for villas and summer-houses. Much of this satire was deserved, for the Cockney could be happy in the country only by surrounding himself with suggestions of the town. His summer-houses shared the Chinese fashion of the London drawing-room, and the Piccadilly statuaries drove a thriving trade in supplying him with gesticulating gods and squabby Cupids.

When these near retreats became absorbed in London, the Cockneys went farther afield, and the satirists followed them to Margate and Brighton. At Hastings, Charles Lamb vented crocodile pity on the Londoners picking up shells for a few days and sighing to be back in town. "I am sure," he says, "that no town-bred or inland-born subjects can feel their true and natural nourishment in these sea-places. . . . I would exchange these sea-gulls for swans, and send

a swallow for ever about the banks of Thanesis." He asks these "sea-charmed emigrants" what they would think if a band of Hastings fishermen with their fishing-tackle on their backs came to see London. "What vehement laughter would it not excite among the daughters of Cheapside and wives of Lombard Street." To-day fifty thousand Lancashire lads will invade London, and be admired and welcomed, while the bungalows of little Londoners are as shells on the seashore.

Thus the old London pride and the old rustic suspicion, registered by countless poets, dramatists and song-makers, may be said to have vanished in our own time. You must look for them now in the books: in Chaucer, in the Elizabethans, in the eighteenth-century essayists, in the Tom and Jerry writers, and in a thousand Victorian songs. The song-writer had no better theme than rustic wonderment presented as a satire on London follies. But who now talks of bumpkins, or makes play with turnips? Yet twenty-five years ago the new-comer was still recognized and twitted: did I not know it? A discomfiting wit still preyed on his dress or accent. I fancy that the Reverend Mr. Spalding's oft-repeated groan, "I don't like London" (in the "Private Secretary"), was the very last stage tag in this species of humour. The material for farce can no longer be found in the collision of London cuteness with country simplicity, and these straws from the theatres and concert halls can be trusted. The bewildered curate's exclamation was effective because it appealed to familiar ideas. When Mr. Penley was reiterating his dislike of London at the Globe Theatre, these half-playful prejudices were still abroad—a not too merciful wit rained on the country-



### BOOKSELLERS' ROW

THE LANE WAS MEDIEVAL IN ITS SHAPES AND CONTOUR, AND NOTHING LIKE IT IS LEFT . . . A WHITE CHURCH TOWER TOPPED THE BUILDINGS EITHER WAY (P. 8)



man from the boxes of bus and cab, or environed him at street-corners. But the ponderous joke was on the eve of explosion, and to-day it is as much a memory as the Cockney "*v.*" To-day, so far from scorning a country accent, Londoners are beginning to deplore the loss of their own.

Recalling the town of his youth, an old Londoner says : "Then it was a comparatively pleasant place to live in, and even the climate seemed better than it is to-day. The country came close up to the town, whereas to-day the town runs a long way out into the country—rather a different thing; and a city-going man did not have to spend two or three hours in getting to and from his work. As a matter of fact, a great many people walked to and fro from the City. . . . The size of London will not bear thinking about, and its probable increase during the next twenty or even ten years ought to give pause to all thoughtful people."

So immense has been the disturbance in the hen-roost that the tendency to fly outwards to villa and cottage has been accompanied by a tendency to make the centre habitable by roosting high. The big square brick houses built a hundred and fifty years ago for spacious town life are pulled down when the chance offers, to be replaced by blocks of flats in which family is piled on family, and the windows give on brick abysses and dust-shoots. So late as 1879, Mr. Charles Dickens, the eldest son of the novelist, noted in his "Dictionary of London" that almost the only flats in London were those in Queen Anne's Mansions, a few in Cromwell Road, and a single set in George Street, Edgware Road. In 1881 the flat system was sufficiently new to inspire a comedy, "Flats," which was brought out at the Criterion Theatre.



In all these changes we witness the uneasy breathing of the London whose life has been continuous for a thousand years. Endowed with the impulse but not the genius of growth, she has attained her inchoate immensity by devouring her rural outposts one by one. City men made an exclusive paradise of some small village three miles out on a great highway, intending the simple life when the day ended. The colony grew, the London road became thinly peopled, and then the houses grew denser and offshoots appeared. Thus the colony was woven into the fabric. London has grown less by formal advance into the country than by overtaking herself. In any suburban highway you may read the story in bricks. Take any great road, say the Kingsland Road; there is no straighter march out of London than this highway, which stretches north from Shoreditch to Dalston, and then, changing its name, flies on through Stoke Newington, Tottenham, and Edmon-ton to green Hertfordshire. A little way along it, from Shoreditch, you come to the Ironmongers' Almshouses, standing back from the road and spreading their long red roofs to the sun. You look through the railings; the sunshine glints on the gold necklet of Sir Robert Jeffery, the founder, standing in his niche; it falls softly on the garden grass; it gleams on the windows, where forty poor ladies are drinking tea. All through the eighteenth century these almshouses, which now flank a roaring highway, stood alone in the fields. To right and left were meadows and market-gardens. Some of these gardens flourished until sixty years ago, when they were built over; and the names of the streets tell where the myrtle (Myrtle Grove), and the laurel (Laurel Street), and the lavender (Lavender Grove),

and the bosky thickets (Woodland Street) were frugally planted when the nineteenth century was young.

The old ladies who smelt the roses and dibbled their potatoes in the Almshouse garden looked up to see the carriers' carts creaking up to Stoke Newington and Enfield. Stoke Newington was the colony, planted on the hill-top far from London. Newington Green, with its red-brick houses, its wrought-iron lamps and gateways, its venerable sward with weather-worn palings, its memories of Poe and Rogers, still interprets a smaller London whose Kingsland Road was dotted with carriages and the carts of wine-merchants and tea-men when it yet ran between hedges, and was crossed by rabbits.

A rural and connective character survives in the road from Shoreditch up to Dalston. It widens with rural extravagance. The pavement becomes a market, where are dumped, or were recently, articles that recall the Sixties, queer kitchen utensils, seashells for garden and rockeries, a shade of wax fruit, a globe from a dame's school, a fly-blown portrait of Palmerston.

The faded subsidiary name, "Sarah's Place," may be read on a house half-way to Dalston. The name is no longer used, the houses being absorbed in the artery. But it recalls the first ownership. Sarah was the wife or daughter of the man who built the row. In "Susannah's Cottages, 1835," "Hiram's Cottages, 1827," "Mansfield's Cottages," and "Richard's Cottage," you read the same story of an extending London, and the exultation of her sons advancing up the Kingsland Road to sit under their own fig-trees. You walk on up the great free road, and in ten minutes you are in the bustle of Dalston, and have passed—from London to London.

I wish that a pictorial record could be kept of the elevations in the principal streets of London, to be renewed perhaps once in a generation. Few things are more irrecoverable than the look of a street that has been displaced or rebuilt. Artists may compile their details; the promoters of bazaars may nail up lath and cloth plausibly, and label it with "Ye's" and "Olde's" without stint; but the Street that *was* eludes us still: St. James's Street as Lord Byron walked it; the Strand as it looked when the Polite Grocers were weighing out their bohea; the Haymarket when it was hay-market; Holborn as it appeared in fearful detail from the Tyburn cart.

To this oblivion of streets there is an exception. There does exist a minute representation of a long London roadway as it was a hundred or more years ago. In it the very cobbles and gratings are marked, every oil lamp-post is numbered, every area railing accurately drawn, every front door and lintel differentiated, and even the long-vanished hedges and trees are nicely portrayed. The street line thus captured is that from Hyde Park Corner to Counter's Bridge, beyond Kensington High Street, as it appeared in 1811. The High Street itself is there, house by house, and window by window—the High Street which Leigh Hunt loved. Every door in these miles stands, as it were, to be rapped at—the pillared tavern door through which was borne the dripping corpse of Shelley's first wife, and the buff house door from which Sir David Wilkie stepped out to take the air when he had done enough work on "The Chelsea Pensioners" or "Blind Man's Buff." This record was made for the Kensington Turnpike Trust by its surveyor, Joseph Salway. Whether he exceeded his instructions in a generous regard for posterity I do not know. The fact



remains that the plans which were made for the use of clerks and contractors are things of beauty and historical interest. Their value is such that they have been reproduced in thirty sections by the London Topographical Society. When these sections are laid together they form the closest reproduction of an old London street one can hope to see, and the boon is completed by the topographical notes prepared by Colonel W. F. Prideaux. The Survey loses none of its minuteness even when the road is emptiest. The hedges and their clay root-earth are drawn as faithfully as the residential bricks. Beyond old Kensington Church there is little but banks and ditches on both sides of the road, which runs through open country as far as Stamford Brook. The plans end at Counter's Bridge with Lee and Kennedy's Nursery. At this point the responsibilities of the Kensington Turnpike Trustees ceased.

Such elaborate street portraiture as this may be an impracticable luxury, but simpler records would suffice. Tallis's "London Street Views," issued in 1838-40, gives the exact elevations of dozens of entire streets in outline, and these, with the help of advertisements, were sold at three halfpence each. I believe that no such drawings have been made since.

Happily, many London streets change very slowly. If you would know how a once rural street may preserve a quiet self-respect amid modernity, turn from Oxford Street into Marylebone High Street. Or you may stand on Camberwell Green and see roaring tides of humanity go this way and that, but, by some miracle, leave Denmark Hill to be a place of quiet breathing, where weather-stained oak palings wander up a pleasant hill, flanked with old houses, and silent lawns whose cedars imprison the night. You wander

over Herne Hill, where apricots are ripening in Ruskin's garden, and descend to Dulwich. Or you climb to Norwood, and just when you need to be reminded that London, though composite, is single, and though changed is continuous, you come to the crest of Gipsy Hill; and there—far over trees, roofs, and blurred town—the Dome and Cross.

Peering into this camp of men, without shape or bound, one must acknowledge that the love of London is not quite the emotion that it was a hundred, or fifty, or even twenty-five years ago. It may be as deep, but it is different. Dr. Johnson's dictum that the man who is tired of London is tired of life was uttered in a compact town whose men of intellect could meet with ease and frequency, and whose ordinary citizens had no thought of travel or "escape." But London's growth has destroyed literary society as Johnson understood it, and tens of thousands of Londoners are actually tired of town life. Every newspaper and hoarding interprets the Londoner's wish for green pastures and still waters. No longer is it the quiet pioneering of the rich that we see. The people, the average million, are resolved to suck where the bee sucks. An immense passion for verandas and deck-chairs has swept over the town, and the speculator can now erect whole villages of pseudo-antique cottages with white walls and plum-coloured roofs in the certainty that Londoners will fill them. Behind these trekking thousands, the working class is pressing into the country, desirous or driven; and for the vast humble population still pent in the streets there is an ever-growing system of briefer escape. The small Londoner no longer takes "a walk round the houses" on Sunday morning. The proletarian motor-bus from Charing Cross is found at rest by the elm-shaded inns of

Harrow Weald and Pinner. Northwood, which was a primitive hamlet, is now a small town; populous Watford is being connected with Euston by a new line; and the London tram-cars grind through the old High Street of Uxbridge.

Meanwhile the eyes of villadom travel yet farther, in search of less dusty roads, deeper peace, and a more sacrosanct apartness with the cuckoo. Where will it end? London as a city of all-round living and amenity is dissolving under our eyes. The desertion of the City by residents has been followed by the desertion of great districts like Islington and Brixton. In the last ten years only nine of the London boroughs have increased their population; twenty have suffered decreases ranging from 1 to 27 per cent. Even a comparatively open district like Marylebone has lost 15,000 inhabitants in the last ten years. Westminster has lost 23,000, Holborn 10,000, St. Pancras 17,000, Islington 7,000. This outward movement of the higher classes, so creditable to the natural man, so healthy in its immediate purpose, has begun to beget doubt and inquiry. When the sun and moon parted, the sun lost substance and the moon heat: the flight of the middle class has reached a point when one may wonder whether an analogy arises. Old London neighbourhoods are emptied of their more prosperous and cultivated residents, and the vacuum created is filled by a meaner population. Yet the "going down" of an urban district is not so much the calamity as the separation of classes that were contiguous, and the consequent loss to the colour and variety of the town. In the streets the poor are left with the poor, in the fields the well-to-do simmer in the juice of a tepid selectness. In these new rural colonies the social equation is distorted. They are pleasant places, these

villages of villas, with their near rabbits and pheasants, their garden hues and hauteurs of pampas grass, and their tinkling tea-cups on the golf-club veranda. But at present they are hybrid and unsocial. All these nice people, who have come apart to sit under their fig-trees, go every day to London to toil, to array themselves, to be amused, and even to be fed. They are of London, though not in it; they are in the country, but not of it. And their villadom, a self-conscious maiden with many flowers laden, shows as a moon, beautiful, but rather cold and fruitless, in London's sky.

The love of London is now unlike the love of any other city, in that it never beholds, still less embraces, its object. No tendrils can encompass a city that seems coextensive with life, and, like life, a sphere of elective affinities and boundless irrelevance. We do not say that we love life, except in rhetoric or extremity; we love the "warm precincts" we find in it. A big city can be loved in the intimate sense, but hardly one that is multiple and measureless. The Bristol man can love Bristol for its trady little central streets and water-gleams, whence he sees windows flashing in the remote sky, and the trees brushing the Clifton heights where his children run. The Newcastle man can love his old abyss of river toil and song, crowned by castle, moot-hall, and cathedral; and the Birmingham man loves with a racial love his friendly New Street and its clustered institutions. When these exclaim on their birthplaces, we see the town in the townsman, and hear it hum in its breath, but he who in these days mouths a too-familiar love of London should be named Leontes.

What, then, is the feeling which London still inspires? It is less an intimate sentiment, or a rapture



THE VANISHED STRAND (OPPOSITE SOMERSET HOUSE)

FEW THINGS ARE MORE IRRECOVERABLE THAN THE LOOK OF A STREET THAT HAS BEEN  
DISPLACED OR REBUILT (P. 18)





of possession, than an awe and joy evoked by human life itself. London's immense connotation of the human story diffuses in the mind, in moments of exaltation, that ether of history in which "many Ninevehs and Hecatomploi" are alive and reverberant. We are of Babylon and Nineveh and Athens and Rome. Such feelings are hardly human nature's daily food. Yet the Londoner feels passionately that the small things he has seen and done are significant because they have been enacted in London. "Bless my dear eyes," said Mr. Roker, shaking his head slowly from side to side, and gazing abstractedly out of the grated window before him, as if he were fondly recalling some peaceful scene of his early youth, "it seems but yesterday that he wopped the coal-heaver down Fox-under-the-Hill by the wharf there. I think I can see him now, a-coming up the Strand between the two street-keepers, a little sobered by the bruising, with a patch o' winegar and brown paper over his right eyelid, and that 'ere lovely bulldog, as pinned the little boy arterwards, a-following at his heels. What a rum thing time is, ain't it, Neddy?" The leather-hearted turnkey of the Fleet prison was not the man to recall the whopping of a coal-heaver with a sigh of rich recollection, if that were all. But it was his ability to evoke the event from a remote dailiness of the ancient and continuing Strand, and his sense of intimacy with one bulldog in London's immemorial and interminable "fancy" that deepened the tones and very nearly dimmed the eye of old Roker of the Fleet.

Thus it is with us all, and better. For a London memory is often transmuted into a symbol by the pressure of its great environment. We may have stood for a few minutes, how long ago we cannot tell, to watch the plane-leaves falling in showers against the Abbey

walls, and now autumn assumes that picture. We may have felt on certain glittering nights—as who has not?—the singular freshness of the west wind in Oxford Street, and the remote hour returns on the wind. Or, when summer first touches us, we think of the great days of enchantment that will roll again over Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens when the palms are spread, and the axles burn, and the parapet of the Serpentine Bridge is warm to the arms of lovers.



## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST PERCH

London in the Nursery—The New-comer—A Wessex Squire—Sir Joshua Reynolds—To London in a Huff—A Shy Lawyer—The Refusers—Robert Buchanan in Stamford Street—"Come out of her, O my people"—The "First Perch"—Hoxton—A Window in Islington—Charles Lamb—"Alexander the Corrector"—Abraham Newland—The Bailiff's Daughter—The Missing Cow—Plackett's Common—"Pop Goes the Weasel"—Bunhill Fields—Dining on Young's "Night Thoughts"—The Temple of the Muses—Shepherdess Walk—Dodd the Dustman—Goswell Street—Claremont Square—Old Pentonville—A Noisy Saint—Carlyle and the Brickfields

I HOPE there are still youths who, when they come to London, think of Troy and Bagdad and Eldorado. For the heart of London's mystery is enshrined in myth and faery. No summary of events or massing of figures can fill out the nursery vision of London's golden pavements, the Lord Mayor in his coach, and the great Bell of Bow—that vision which Wordsworth expressed in "The Prelude"—

Would that I could now  
Recall what then I pictured to myself.  
Of mitred Prelates, Lords in ermine clad,  
The King, and the King's Palace, and, not last,  
Nor least, Heaven bless him! the renowned Lord Mayor!

A too emotional coming to London was that of a West Country traveller who entered the Metropolis on

a coach early in the last century. All went well as far as Brentford. Seeing the lamps of that outlying village, the countryman imagined that he was at his journey's end, but as mile succeeded mile of illumination he asked in alarm, "Are we not yet in London, and so many miles of lamps?" At last, at Hyde Park Corner, he was told that this was London; but still the lamps receded and the streets lengthened, until he sank into a coma of astonishment. When they entered Lad Lane, the Cheapside coaching centre, a travelling companion bade the West Countryman remain in the coffee-room while he made inquiries. On returning he found no trace of him, nor did he hear any more of him for six weeks. He then learned that he was in custody in Dorsetshire—a lunatic. The poor fellow was taken home, and after a brief return of his reason he died. He was able to explain that he had become more and more bewildered by the lights and by the endless streets, from which he thought he should never be able to escape. Somehow, he walked blindly westward, and at last emerged into the country bereft of memory and wits. I have always respected this Dorsetshire squire; other arrivals seem tame in comparison.

The garrulous Cyrus Redding relates nothing better than his own arrival in the centre of human gossip. He had journeyed in the Bath coach, better supplied with money and introductions than most new-comers. And he had the taste for London: "I took up my quarters at Hatchett's Hotel, Piccadilly. There was a rout in Arlington Street the same night, and the roll of the carriages kept me awake. I rose unrefreshed, put a letter or two of introduction into my pocket, and set out: 'The world before me where to choose my place of rest.'" There you have the sense of arrival in

London—the world's capital. He rose the next morning and ascended the Monument, and "shot" the rapids at London Bridge, and within a few days he saw the burial of Pitt in Westminster Abbey.

One of the best pictured arrivals of this kind is that of Sir Joshua Reynolds. He was eighteen when the coach brought him from Plymouth to London, taking more time on the journey than the "Lusitania" takes to cross the Atlantic. The place where his feet touched the stones of London was the White Horse Cellar Tavern in Piccadilly. The Piccadilly tavern which now bears that name, and the inscription "Established 1720," is not the tavern Sir Joshua saw. This stood, then and long after, over the way, close to Arlington Street. When he arrived on that autumn evening in 1740, Sir Robert Walpole was probably eating his dinner in his Arlington Street house. But the young artist had no time to gaze; he must find the house of Thomas Hudson, the portrait painter, to whom he was bound apprentice. Hudson's house in Great Queen Street is still standing. A porter shouldered his baggage and led the way across Leicester Fields. There a prosperous journey was to end in disappointment. The great man had gone the way that his pupil had come, and was painting the portraits of lords and ladies at Bath. Where was the apprentice to sleep? Fortunately he had an uncle in the Temple, and there, above the gardens beloved by Spenser, he slept that night, unaware that to these quiet courts his dearest friends would come—Johnson to work, Goldsmith to die.

Men have come to London in many moods. Alexander Wedderburn (Lord Loughborough), whose old house is marked by a tablet in Russell Square, came to London in a huff. He might have remained

all his life at the Scotch Bar but for a violent altercation which he had with a fellow-barrister, Mr. Lockhart, then the Dean of Faculty. During a trial the Dean called his young opponent a "presumptuous boy." Wedderburn, bursting with rage, said : "The learned Dean has confined himself on this occasion to vituperation ; I do not say that he is capable of reasoning, but if tears would have answered his purpose I am sure tears would not have been wanting." The Dean muttered threats of vengeance, and Wedderburn proceeded : "I care little, my lords, what may be said or done by a man who has been disgraced in his person and dishonoured in his bed." The Court was now aghast, and the Lord President declared that "this was language unbecoming an advocate and a gentleman." Wedderburn retorted that "his lordship had said as a judge what he could not justify as a gentleman." The Court gravely consulted as to how this hot-headed young man should be quelled, and it was resolved that he must retract his words or suffer deprivation. Wedderburn rose, and with deadly calm said : "My lords, I neither retract nor apologize, but I will save you the trouble of deprivation ; there is my gown"—here he stripped it from his shoulders—"and I will never wear it more, *virtute me involvo*." He then walked out of court, and that night started for London and the Woolsack.

The manner of Wedderburn's coming to London suggests, by contrast, the efforts which John Eardley Wilmot, afterwards Lord Chief Justice, made to quit London for ever. He feared to get on, and avoided success as carefully as other men seek it. His efforts to hide his candle under a bushel failed. But when a seat in Parliament was offered him he knew that he must fly. In a quiet street in Derby, on a patrimony

of a few hundreds a year, Wilmot settled down to be an obscure local lawyer. Twelve months of peace were granted him, and then, without his previous knowledge, like a bolt from the blue, there fell on him the appointment to be a Puisne Judge of the King's Bench. He declared that nothing would persuade him to face again the roar and smoke of London, but the advice of friends and his sense of duty prevailed : he returned. The calm of his career on the bench was broken only by his promotion to the Lord Chief Justiceship, and the offer of the Great Seal, which by summoning all his powers he successfully refused. Full of years and honours, he retired in 1770, vainly imploring the King not to grant him a pension.

Not a few young men have left the provincial ark to find no place in London on which they could rest their feet, or they have refused London's gifts. Thomas Bewick left Newcastle for London, looked round him, and as deliberately returned to Newcastle. In his maturer years he wrote : "For my part I am of the same opinion now as I was when in London, and that is that I would rather herd sheep on Mickley Bank top than remain in London, though by doing so I should be made the Premier of England." Look at his drawings : you feel that he could not have been happy away from that noble beacon of the Tyne, which appears in them again and again, the lantern tower of St. Nicholas' Cathedral, with its thirteen flashing vanes, which Ben Jonson thought was worth the journey from London to see.

Just as clear was John Dalton that London was not his true environment. "A most surprising place," he wrote, "worth one's while to see once, but the most disagreeable place on earth for one of a contemplative turn to reside in constantly." He returned to

Manchester, and made it the birthplace of the Atomic Theory. Yet more contemplative men than Dalton have made their homes in London.

A very good hater of London was Philip Gilbert Hamerton. As a boy he came to a resolution in these words : " Every Englishman who can afford it ought to see London *once*, as a patriotic duty, and I am not sorry to have been there to have got that duty performed ; but no power on earth shall ever induce me to go to that supremely disagreeable place again." Later in life he supplemented this, and wrote : " It is curious, but perfectly true, that I have never in my life felt the slightest desire to purchase or rent any house whatever in London, and there is not a house in all the ' wilderness of brick ' that I would accept as a free gift if it were coupled with the condition that I should live in it."

Few well-nurtured youths have made a more curious entry into London than the late Mr. Robert Buchanan, the only author whom I have seen standing behind his own publishing counter. In May, 1860, he arrived at King's Cross from Glasgow without plans or prospects, and minus his railway ticket, which he had lost on the journey. After some trouble with the station authorities, who detained his luggage, he breakfasted at a coffee-house and strolled into Regent's Park, where he laid down on the grass to think. There he encountered a youth of his own age, who reminded him of the Artful Dodger. To him he owed his first night's sleep in London, in a lodging-house or thieves' kitchen near Shoreditch, where next morning he awoke none the worse, and with the little money he had in his pocket safe. A week later he found his first perch in London, a garret at No. 66 Stamford Street. It is curious that his friend David Gray, the young Glasgow



poet, spent his first night in London wandering about Hyde Park. Later, he shared with Buchanan what he afterwards called "the dear old ghostly bankrupt garret" in Stamford Street. Disappointed in literature and weakened by mortal illness, David Gray asked only that he might not die in London, and one winter morning Buchanan put his friend into the Scotch express at Euston. "Home—home—home," was his cry.

It is of the significance of London that it inspires both love and hate, irresistible lure and strong refusal. In one great man it bred a lifelong tragedy of doubt. Few things in modern biography are more touching than the unbreakable thread of regret for country silence which ran through the London life of Edward Burne-Jones. The dreamer of beautiful dreams became a Londoner, and a London society man. He dined out, and was socially bound and driven. Yet a vision of his youth followed him like a jilted ego. It was in 1851, when he was a Birmingham youth of eighteen, that he walked over from Harris Bridge, where he paid a yearly visit to some friends, to see the Cistercian Monastery in Charnwood Forest. What he saw that day left a lifelong picture on his mind, though it is not certain that he ever returned to the place again. In her beautiful biography of her husband, Lady Burne-Jones writes: "Friends, wife, and children all knew the undercurrent of longing in his soul for the rest and peace which he thought he had seen there that day." But London loaded him with personal fetters, and her streets crept round his Fulham home. The District Railway growled near, some fine elms came down, Fulham began to call itself West Kensington, and callers came in crowds to utter social shibboleths round the painter of "The

Sleep of Arthur in Avalon." London was slowly killing the dream that had pleased his boyish thought. At last his protests against its demands became poignant. Year after year he vowed to forsake the rush. "How I want to be out of it; and more and more my heart is pining for that monastery in Charnwood Forest. Why there? I don't know, only that I saw it when I was little, and have hankered after it ever since. . . . Many a time I plan flight and escape—only the work I do is so unportable, it holds me to it, and I cannot carry it with me! . . . 'Come out of her, O my people.'"

No one wrote more bitterly of London than George Gissing, but when his Henry Ryecroft looks back on his old lodging-houses, the old trite street-corners, the restaurants and coffee-shops where he found insufficient nourishment, he exclaims: "Some day I will go to London and spend a day or two amid the dear old horrors." He meant his first London lodgings, where he was better provided with hope than money. A Londoner can forget much, but his "first perch," as Lord Eldon called it (anticipating somewhat Disraeli's remark, "London is a roost for every bird"), is a lasting memory. Eldon, then John Scott, brought his Bessy and his bairns to Cursitor Street. He would say in his years of fame and dignity, "There was my first perch. Many a time have I run down from Cursitor Street to Fleet Market to buy sixpenn'orth of sprats for our supper." A like story is told of Lord Northington: when he reached the Woolsack and a mansion in Grosvenor Square, he and his wife looked back wistfully to their small house in Great James Street, Bedford Row, where a leg of mutton had lasted three days—the first day hot, the second day cold, and the third day hashed.



The first perch ! There was no reason why I should have chosen my own in the dismal region of Hoxton. But when I had found acceptance in the City and was, so to speak, a licensed Londoner, I had no better plan than to walk in random search of a roof. I like to remember that casual faring into London's arms. As it happened, I wandered north, up Moorgate Street, past the Artillery ground, blinking with joy when I saw Finsbury Square, nobly metropolitan, and the Bunhill burial-ground—eloquent of the City's dusty past.

I walked up the New North Road without rudder, and thought that the names above the little shops of clockmakers, newsagents, and small milliners were possible only in London and in the novels of Dickens. In a side-street a decent house showed a card in its window, and in five minutes I was lord of a chamber whose windows looked on the mysterious "backs" of another street. That night I said : These, then, are London dwellings, and they were old before I was born. A light would travel up some stairs, gleaming and failing as it went up from landing to landing. Resolving to make a unique collection of London shopkeepers' names, I fell asleep. I have never made that collection, but I believe that the only man in London named Oliver Twist lives to-day in my old Hoxton.

George Gissing knew Hoxton. He writes in "Demos" : "On the dim borderland of Islington and Hoxton, in a corner made by the intersection of the New North Road and the Regent's Canal, is discoverable an irregular triangle of small dwelling-houses, bearing the name of Wilton Square." Here he laid the home of the Mutimer family. Wilton Square still answers to Gissing's picture, even to the railings and the front doors "reached by an ascent of five steps." He describes the canal—"maladetta e

*sventurata fossa*—stagnating in utter foulness between coal-wharfs and builders' yards." But London accommodates itself to no phrases, and when I went that way last summer the canal was not very foul, the sky above it was blue, and between two bridges, each bearing a knot of onlookers, a score of naked figures made one connect Hoxton with sun-clad boyhood : the truth of the "Demos" picture was curiously suspended. If you are not sealed of the tribe of Gissing, or a little mad on localities, I can suggest no reason why you should search out Wilton Square.

One night the lights and crowds of Islington High Street burst upon my view. I saw my mistake, and soon afterwards quitted the vale for the plateau. I was now to look down on the Islington High Street itself, which Ryecroft condemns as dreary and ugly—I cannot think why. Its long western curve of old houses set on a raised pavement has a grace of its own, and at that time sundry scraps of the old village green survived. The shops of Upper Street and the little cafés about the "Angel," the ceaseless uphill arrivals of tram-cars from the City and King's Cross, the white electric light over the theatre, and the vague traditions of merriment, and bailiff's daughters, and fat cattle, made up a sum of cheerfulness that contented me. From Colebrooke Row I looked down on the barges coming from Wales, and emerging with all their suggestions of fields and horizons from the mysterious Caledonian Tunnel.

Particularly on Sunday morning it was pleasant in 1886 to look out on the long bend of Upper Street between the Liverpool Road and the Agricultural Hall, and to watch through the tree-trunks the omnibuses passing with tinkle and hoof-beat. Even now—and there have been dire changes since 1886—



FRANK'S BYANUE, 1912.

### HIGH STREET, ISLINGTON

ITS LONG WESTERN CURVE OF OLD HOUSES, SET ON A RAISED PAVEMENT, HAS A GRACE OF ITS OWN (p. 34)



the pleasant old village asserts itself. Come to it from the north and you feel its ancient bounds and compactness when you pass St. Mary's Church. Climb to it from the south, west, or east, and the sight of that busy corner at the "Angel" is exhilarating if you have London charity. You are aware of a population and an atmosphere. A hundred years ago Islington was scarcely connected with London at all, and a bell was rung at the Angel Tavern to summon travellers to make up a party strong enough to proceed safely over the fields to London. Roaring thoroughfares now link the Angel corner with the City, with central London, and with the great railway centres down there in the misty mid-region of Euston and St. Pancras. Yet Islington maintains her separateness. Though near to the old London, she is still a little removed in spirit. Her theatres, her music-hall, her taverns, her restaurants, both English and foreign, her newspapers, and her penny shows, announce a hill-top detachment.

The "Angel" that Hogarth knew (he portrayed it in his Stage Coach print) disappeared in 1819. Its successor has been replaced in recent years by a new building whose dome is a landmark easily seen in the roads that ascend to it.

Hard by the "Angel," unseen, because built over, the New River flows to Clerkenwell. Charles Lamb's famous cottage, recently distinguished by one of the London County Council's tablets, is properly described as No. 64 Duncan Terrace. I look on it with the more interest for the reason that a few years ago I had the privilege of receiving a cup of tea from Mrs. Edward FitzGerald, who very well remembered Charles Lamb in Colebrooke Cottage. As a girl she was the Lucy Barton in whose album Charles Lamb wrote the lines beginning : "Little book surnamed of white."

Mrs. FitzGerald would relate how she left the omnibus with her father, Bernard Barton, the Quaker-poet of Woodbridge, and how they rapped at this door.<sup>1</sup> Lamb seemed to have been reading, for a folio lay before him. She particularly remembered that in a large bookcase nearly every volume bore the white tickets which they had worn when Lamb picked them up on the bookstalls. It was like Lamb to be whimsically indifferent to their presence. Mrs. FitzGerald remembered little of the talk between Lamb and her father. It was about books. They finished with a luncheon of oysters, and then Lamb, who intended to take a walk, saw them to their omnibus. Only ten years ago it was possible to listen to this account of a morning call on Charles Lamb in Islington eighty years gone. Much water has flowed past Colebrooke Cottage since then, and now the stream is beneath the ground, and beneath Lamb's description, "mockery of a river—liquid artifice—wretched conduit!"

From the middle of Colebrooke Row one passes through Camden Street to a quaint little street, flagged for foot-passengers only, called Camden Passage. This is Islington's version of Booksellers' Row. It is lined with small miscellaneous shops displaying picture-frames, second-hand books, old furniture, foreign stamps, go-carts, old clocks, and ornaments and shells obtained by deep soundings in early Victorian parlours. In this by-way died Alexander Cruden, author of the "Concordance." Apart from his "Concordance," he attracted much attention by his eccentric benevolences. Many people considered him insane, but at least "Alexander the Corrector" might be written as one who loved his fellow-men—

<sup>1</sup> See Mrs. FitzGerald's account, communicated to Mr. E. V. Lucas, by whom it was included in "Bernard Barton and his Friends."



always excepting John Wilkes, and, perhaps, the type of young clergyman to whom he once presented a work entitled "Mother's Catechism : Dedicated to the Young and Ignorant."

Islington's list of "worthies" is a long one. The lintelled cottage of Phelps, the actor, still stands near Duncan Terrace, facing a boarded-in patch of the old green. Colley Cibber, the dramatist, is said to have died next door to the Castle Tavern, near Colebrooke Row ; Captain Mayne Reid lived in a house near the Agricultural Hall ; Thomas Dibdin had several addresses in Islington ; and Canonbury Tower was the home, not only of Oliver Goldsmith, but of Ephraim Chambers, the compiler of the first English encyclopædia, whose epitaph in Bunhill Fields describes him as

Heard of by many,  
Known to few.

This after all must be the usual lot of an encyclopædia-maker, and it applied not less to Dr. Abraham Rees, who also lived in Canonbury Tower, and published his "Rees's Cyclopædia" in forty-five volumes some ninety years ago.

Another Islington writer, whose works, though ephemeral, were extremely useful in their generation and always fetched their full value, was Mr. Abraham Newland, whose signature was on every Bank of England note. He died at 38 Highbury Place, after retiring thither from twenty-five years' service as chief cashier of the Bank of England. During that period he never once slept out of the Bank. His signature was so familiar that the expression to "sham Abraham Newland" became a cant term for forgery.

Then there is the bailiff's daughter. It has long been held that the Islington of the old ballad was an obscure Norfolk village of the same name. This theory cannot be suffered gladly, and an attempt was made a few years ago by Colonel W. F. Prideaux to upset the claims made by Bishop Percy and others for the East Anglian hamlet.<sup>1</sup> The chief argument against the London suburb is that the distance between Islington and London, even allowing for the state of travel in Elizabethan times, hardly accounts for the "seven long years" separation of the lovers. On the other hand, if the Norfolk Islington be meant, it is curious that the ballad makes no mention of nightfall in the girl's journey up to London "her true love to inquire." Colonel Prideaux does not deal with these matters, which, indeed, are too intangible for much discussion. His exposition turns on a new version of the ballad, discovered in Ireland by Mrs. C. Milligan Fox, in which an interesting variation from Bishop Percy's version occurs. The ninth stanza runs—

Take from me my milk-white steed,  
My saddle and my *bow*,  
And I will away to some foreign countree,  
Where no one will we know.

instead of—

If she be dead, then take my horse,  
My saddle and bridle also ;  
For I will into some far countrye,  
Where nae man shall me knowe.

The word "bow" in this version is interesting testimony to the antiquity of the ballad, but to Colonel Prideaux it suggests more. He remarks: "It brings us to the time when the London young man was wont to spend a good deal of his spare time at the 'butts,'

<sup>1</sup> See "Notes and Queries," 19 November, 1904.



which were numerous in the suburbs of London during the Tudor regime. Finsbury Fields were the favourite rendezvous for the archers in the north of London, and Islington Butts were situated at that point of Islington Common where the boundary lines of Hackney and Islington parishes meet. The turf embankments which constituted the 'butts' may be said roughly to have stood at the junction of the Kingsland and the Ball's Pond Roads. We can, therefore, imagine that the bailiff's daughter, trudging along the dusty Shoreditch Road on her way to 'fair London,' met the esquire's son riding forth with his bow and quiver to practise at the butts, with the happy *dénouement* that is related in the ballad. . . . The date of the ballad may, I think, be ascribed to the latter half of Elizabeth's reign."

A pleasant Islington tradition, repeated in several other parts of London, is that of the 999 cows which no herdmanship could increase to 1000. The cows belonged to Mr. Laycock, one of the great Islington cow-keepers of the early part of the last century. Mr. Laycock's ambition to achieve the round number was said to be inspired by the statement that Job had a thousand cattle. But the farmer's thousandth cow was always to seek. Laycock's Yard in the Liverpool Road still preserves the memory of this great dairyman, who, however, had rivals. A Mr. West is stated in Baird's "General View of the Agriculture of Middlesex" (quoted by Nelson in his "History of Islington") to have possessed nearly a thousand cows in 1793. Moreover, the same legend about 999 cows is associated with Willan's farm, on the site of Regent's Park. The Islington cattle-layers (or lairs) were situated on an area bounded on the east by the Upper Street of Islington and the Liverpool Road, which was

then a comparatively new route for the north-western mails between the Angel at Islington and the Holloway Road. When Mr. Laycock died, or pretty soon after, his cattle-sheds were acquired by the London General Omnibus Company.

Apart from its relation to Islington, the Angel Tavern is the half-way house on that boulevard that failed, of which the Euston Road and Pentonville Hill are the western stretch and the City Road the eastern. I have a kindness for the City Road, that misbegotten and forlorn artery. It was projected by a Mr. Charles Dingley in the year 1756. He was a timber merchant, and he is stated to have made an unsuccessful attempt to establish the use of "that ingenious machine, the saw-mill." It seems a pity that he declined to allow the road to bear his name, for had he done so the lower part might have been cheerfully known as Dingley Dell.

Another inventor, less shy of immortality, gave his name to the first terrace on the right as you descend from Islington. Dalby Terrace (but the name has recently disappeared) perpetuates the name of a Mr. Dalby who, greater even than the Great Twalmley, invented the public-house beer-engine. He lived for a time in the large house which heads the terrace and looks to the "Angel." It is now the office of a building society.

The triangular patch of ground at this spot, known to all who know their London by the clock and obelisk at its apex, has a curious history. It was formerly a deep hollow, and was called Jack Plackett's Common. Plackett was a robber. Born in Islington, he was not without local loyalty, for all his iniquities were done within a mile of the Angel Tavern, and it was on this patch of ground that he paid the last penalty of the law in 1762. Jack Plackett's Common became the scene of prize-fights.

As a boy, I had heard of the City Road from a schoolfellow who was born in Brazil. There, amid the scents of bananas and coffee, under a sun hotter than the City Road's hottest, he had heard voices trolling the verse :—

Up and down the City Road,  
In and out the "Eagle,"  
That's the way the money goes—  
Pop goes the weasel !

It was his first foretaste of London, and I think he made it mine. This jingle, like a speck of radium, had given me years of mysterious light. To allow that light to be extinguished in the reality would have been interesting, but I was too late for the "Eagle." The tavern, indeed, remained, and the eagle on its roof, but the Grecian Saloon had suffered a change. I looked over it before its demolition in 1901. It had been occupied for some years by the Salvation Army, but as the features of the dying will assume youthful expressions, the ruined Grecian declared its earliest uses. The theatre stood still, and above the torn proscenium delicate vases and finials rose guiltless and forlorn. Inside the theatre mouldy Cupids and tattered floral designs rioted over the ceiling and round the dress-circle. The orchestra was the edge of a precipice, but the back wall of the stage reared itself aloft, and in its crevices the sparrows were building.

It was in 1825, or thereabouts, that Thomas Rouse, landlord of the "Eagle," opened the saloon which was to be the last resort of its kind and also "the father and mother, the dry and wet nurse of the music hall." <sup>1</sup> Singers whose names became inseparable from

<sup>1</sup> It is thus characterized by the late Mr. John Hollingshead in his "My Lifetime." He points out that the "more or less inspired licensed

the Grecian were Harry Howell and Robert Glindon. One night Paganini, gyrating in the crowd, was so mobbed that he had to retire. A more typical frequenter was Miss Jemima Evans, whose "How 'ev'nly !" is familiar to the reader of "Boz." Her exclamation was inspired by the walks, the refreshment-boxes, "painted and ornamented like so many snuff-boxes," and the waiters tearing about with glasses of negus. A remark by the gentleman in the plaid waistcoat on Miss Jemima's lady friend's ankles led to sudden war between Mr. Samuel Wilkins and the waistcoat.

The tactical view-point of this howling artery is its intersection with Old Street. Here every face is that of a worker, and, as the faces come and go, the expression is the same. In this welter of business and desires the mass of St. Luke's Lunatic Asylum rises like a sad suggestion. A hundred and thirty years ago St. Luke's was built as a suburban supplement to Bethlem Hospital. Now it looks like a refuge for minds that snap in the street, as though a man should say, "I will bear it no longer," and turn in there, and be a child again, and look out of those high windows on the hurly-burly, forgetful and forgot. Yet in the City Road you have a punctually toiling, long-enduring crowd, and, in the evening hour of release, a cheerful one. The seats on the tram-cars gliding up from Finsbury Pavement are full, and hundreds are walking. Clerks, foremen, compositors, packers, warehousemen, girls from the factories of Finsbury, Bunhill, and Cripplegate are

virtualler " who founded the saloon, and ruled it nightly from a private box with the aid of a huge walking-stick, gathered round him many singers and actors of talent. Here, before they were known in the West End, appeared members of the Leclercq family, the great Frederic Robson, Mr. and Mrs. Cauldfield, Mr. Flexmore, Mr. Sims Reeves (who appeared in 1809 under the name of Johnson), and many others of account.

hastening north to their homes and lodgings in Hoxton, Canonbury, Pentonville, and Highbury.

By an impressive fate the City Road roars past the cemetery of Bunhill Fields, to which Southey gave the name of the Campo Santo of Nonconformity. Here lie the heroes of Puritan England, the champions of civil and religious liberty, the upholders of industry and simplicity of life. If Melrose must be visited by moonlight, this field of sepulchres should be seen on an autumn afternoon when the leaves are falling and a soft haze envelops the haunts of Wesley. Although the ground is thick with gravestones, and its gatepillars inscribed with names, the number of interments exceeds any that the scene suggests. That number is said to be 124,000. The records, which extend from 1665 to 1852, are intact in Somerset House. Certain graves give to this harvest of death an undying interest. Here Bunyan ended his pilgrim's progress on earth, and in old Bibles there are records that a father or a mother was laid near—so many feet—from his grave. Here many Cromwells are buried, Isaac Watts's name hallows another stone, and yonder is laid the hand that wrote "Robinson Crusoe." All the anecdote of Dissent is recalled to your deciphering gaze. The name of Thomas Bradbury recalls the last days of Queen Anne. Bradbury feared for the safety of Dissent, and though he could never have prayed for the Queen's death, he was ready to see in it a Divine Providence. During the Queen's illness he met Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, in Smithfield, and learned that the end was near. The Bishop, who was on his way to the Court, promised to send word to Bradbury in the event of the Queen's death. If he should happen to be in the pulpit the man was to drop a handkerchief in his view. This signal was given, and the



minister thrilled his audience by suddenly rendering thanks for the deliverance of the country from evil counsels, and asking the Divine blessing on "His Majesty King George and the House of Hanover." It was long Bradbury's boast that he was the first to proclaim King George.

To this region belongs the story of one of the few London tradesmen who have left autobiographies. I wish there had been more such, for in these books one dives deep into the everyday past of London, and into the affairs of the dead Londoner in the surviving street.

"I opened shop on Midsummer Day, 1774, in Featherstone Street, in the parish of St. Luke, and I was as well pleased in surveying my little shop with my name over it, as was Nebuchadnezzar when he cried, '*Is not this great Babylon that I have built?*'" The poor West Country cobbler who, on setting up in business in London, thus compared himself, became the greatest popular bookseller that London had known. Nor have later achievements belittled the bibliopolic triumph of James Lackington. Sixteen years later this bookish cobbler was able to state his profits from bookselling at £4000 a year, and this was no final figure. Lackington's Repository in Finsbury Circus was long tabulated as one of the sights of London, and, indeed, it became a kind of golden image of bookselling, set up in the plain of Finsbury, whose height was threescore cubits. To drop Nebuchadnezzar, this "Temple of the Muses," as the proud bookseller called it, was actually a fine affair. When it was completed a coach and four was driven round the floor under its great dome, whose supporting walls were to be lined with a million books.

Lackington's success grew out of his native love of

books. His initial stock was his small and tattered private library, brought from Taunton, and its value, with an unstated quantity of shoe-leather thrown in, was about £5. But the cobbler and the cobbler's wife had a spirit in them that was new to Featherstone Street, and was bound, like new wine, to burst that narrow bottle of a street off the City Road.

A story proves this. When the pair were scraping together the furniture for their one room and workshop, Christmas Eve arrived, and with it the noble idea of a Christmas dinner. Mrs. Lackington sent her husband out to do his best with half a crown. The sum was small, yet it might stretch to a little festival. On the way he spied a second-hand bookshop, and it occurred to him that with no unsupportable deduction from the proposed luxuries he might possess himself of one more cheap book for his library. He accordingly entered the shop, thinking to lay out sixpence or ninepence, but he ended by putting down his whole sum for a copy of Young's "Night Thoughts." And it was with the "Night Thoughts," and a well-composed harangue on the superiority of intellectual over sensual pleasures, that the young man came home. "I think," he said, "I have acted wisely, for had I bought a dinner we should have eaten it to-morrow, and the pleasure would have been soon over; but should we live fifty years longer we shall have the 'Night Thoughts' to feast upon." And, wonderful to relate, the cobbler's wife accepted this view of the matter, helped, perhaps, by her dolorous Methodism and her pathetic pride in self-denial.

A man who could make his Christmas dinner off Young's "Night Thoughts" would never know the night of poverty. Six months later, with a stock now worth £25, Lackington removed to a shop and parlour



at 46 Chiswell Street, where, not sticking to his last, he became one entire and perfect bookseller. He became, too, a widower and a man of the world. It was the reading of "John Bunce" that expanded him. When he laid down the last of its four volumes, "my soul had took its freedom up," he declares, quoting a forgotten poet. Nor was he perturbed when one of "Mr. Wesley's old women," as he now pleasantly called his former pastors, assured him in polite company that "the devil would soon toss him about in hell with a pitchfork." Married anew to a lady who loved books without despising cakes and ale, he was buying stock at a great rate and becoming intellectual (he tells us), in the same way as butchers become fat by the smell of meat. Whereas in Featherstone Street he had beckoned across the way for a pot of porter, he could now provide his friends with port and sherry, and thence he rose to a country box and a carriage inscribed with the motto—more aristocratic now than then—"Small profits do great things."

The time was ripe for the man. He speaks of the increase of readers in the last twenty years of the eighteenth century. "All ranks and degrees now read." The poorer sort of farmers, and country people in general, had given up telling each other ghost stories in the fire-light, and "on entering their houses you may see 'Tom Jones,' 'Roderick Random,' and other entertaining books, stuck up in the bacon racks."

To fill bacon racks with books may be said to have been Lackington's aim in business. His secret was simple. In 1780 he determined, against the whole custom of the trade, to give no credit whatever, and to sell books quickly at small profits. "Remainder" sales were frequent, and he was surprised to discover that it was usual for booksellers who bought up

remainders to destroy half or three-fourths of such books, and to charge little less than the full publication price for the copies they kept. He broke this custom, and sold all his "remainder" purchases at very low prices, in accordance with his principle that small profits do great things. The trade took alarm, and the arch-underseller was vilified. Yet this phase passed, the while Lackington, who was a mighty inscriber of quotations in his tablets, consoled himself with the sufficiently venomous remark in Carpenter's "Joineriana" that "a bookseller is in general a bad judge of everything, but his stupidity shines most conspicuously in that particular branch of knowledge by which he gets his bread." Booksellers had the wit to perceive that they, like the public, could buy profitably from the all-buying Lackington, who began to issue huge separate catalogues to booksellers and ordinary readers. He provided in his day and generation a big and popular form of bookselling, analogous to the hypnotic and far-reaching methods now employed by the drapery trades. His reward was a satisfied old age at Merton, where he wrote his interesting but rather scandalous memoirs. These still float round the London bookstalls, though they are hardly likely to fulfil his prayer that they might live

Till they in flames at last expire,  
And help to set the world on fire.

It is easy to see that the original houses in the City Road were built for well-to-do people who desired to be rural within twenty minutes' walk of the Bank. For a time they succeeded. There are records of delicious fruit raised here. You still see the iron balconies from which the City Road children looked

down on currant-bushes and sweet-williams. There is a fragrant name, Shepherdess Walk, now borne by a street of deadly straightness, along which you walk in the shadow of a workhouse. The manners of this neighbourhood may be deduced from the permanent cautions against window-breaking which meet the eye. Here within living memory were fields and tea-gardens. Now all is brick and toil, with a tendency for the factory to spurn the house from the street.

There are, perhaps, still a few Londoners who remember Shepherd and Shepherdess Fields when syllabubs were giving place to mortar, and when Dodd the Dustman's cinder-heaps adorned the canal. Once a year Dodd—the Mr. Boffin of "Our Mutual Friend"—gave a beanfeast to his minions and their sweet-hearts, and the neighbouring bricklayers were bidden to the revels, on which Mr. Rouse of the Grecian shed the light of his countenance.

Thus in obscure ways has London enlarged herself. In a forgotten summer evening the Dustmen of the old streets are dancing with the Bricklayers of the new, and in the background the City Road resigns itself to mixed destinies. Even in recent years one has seen the City Road lose a certain Whistlerian charm it had. The view of the Regent's Canal from the bridge, half-way along the road to Islington, no longer invites. Various rows of cottages have given place to warehouses, and a church has been dismantled. A circular plot of grass, railed in and gateless, has disappeared near Windsor Terrace. For that weird circle Dickens might have found a story, and Carlyle a phrase. Carlyle, indeed, should have described this Appian Way of toil, this road of wry annals and vexed property, of dusty graves and exploded revels.

Returning to Plackett's Common, a road which here

forms an acute angle with the City Road is worth a passing gaze. It recalls one of the most cheerful passages in all literature. This: "That punctual servant of all work, the sun, had just risen, and begun to strike a light on the morning of the thirteenth of May, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, when Mr. Samuel Pickwick burst like another sun from his slumbers, threw open his chamber window, and looked out upon the world beneath. Goswell Street was at his feet—Goswell Street was on his right hand—and as far as eye could reach, Goswell Street extended on his left; and the opposite side of Goswell Street was over the way."

How many million readers have been lifted by this vision of a Goswell Street they have never looked upon! This London glimpse has passed into the consciousness of the whole English race. The name has become Goswell Road. Mr. Pickwick's Goswell Street was the lower portion of what is now one road, rising from the Charterhouse to the "Angel" at Islington. Not long ago, more by accident than by design, I walked again in Mr. Pickwick's tracks, and turned to look at the street on which that benevolent brow sheds unfading lustre. To my surprise Goswell Street was filled with stones, implements, and trestles, and was noisy with the sound of hammers on iron. Goswell Street was in the hands of the London County Council, and on its roadway a new conduit electric tramline was being laid in the sweat of many brows. The very portions of Goswell Street in which I was inclined to locate Mr. Pickwick's lodgings suffered these assaults, and in several places the opposite side of Goswell Street was no longer over the way. Yet the old road was there, basking in a June sun and refreshed by a summer breeze. Although London rebuilds her streets,

she seldom interferes with their contours. To-day, much as in Stow's time, Goswell Street "stretcheth up towards Isledon."

From the "Angel," in the old days, one strolled often to Claremont Square and its reservoir to look down Pentonville Hill on the misty vale of St. Pancras. London rests her elbow in Claremont Square, a place of large windows, fantail doors, conventional glimpses of india-rubber plants climbing between white lace curtains, and eternal afternoon. The name "Claremont" shared by the neighbouring chapel appears to have no historical basis. It was probably suggested by the site, and by that amiable weakness which makes our suburban roads talk (like Fred Bayham) "sumptuously" in terms of Chatsworth, Hawarden, and Dalmeny.

To Claremont Square and to Amwell Street (a few doors from the square) went George Cruikshank, young and new married. In Amwell Street he illustrated the "Sketches by Boz" and imagined he wrote "Oliver Twist." There, to his apprentices and to young disciples like George Augustus Sala, he gave out his single and constant maxim of art: "Take care to draw the pelvis right, for what are you, and what can you do, if your pelvis is wrong?" In the evening Cruikshank was to be seen at the Sir Hugh Myddleton Tavern hard by, where he sat with his fellow-members of the "Crib," a club of choice spirits founded by Joseph Grimaldi. Possibly it was after such a night that George, sitting up in his bed in a torture of cogitation, saw in the bedroom looking-glass the reflection of his own face and his fingers between his lips, and exclaimed, "That's it!" He had seen Fagin in the condemned cell.

Something in the air and sky of this region might



suggest, if one did now know of them, the grass slopes of earlier days, and the extinguished lights and "garlands dead" of tea-garden and bowling-green. The street names recall Copenhagen House, White Conduit House, and other Cockney resorts which disappeared at the beginning of the last century. At the corner of Penton Street is the Belvedere Tavern, and inside it a large painting of its old racket-court with players and spectators ; and here, in Winchester Place, opposite the reservoir, was Dobney's Bowling Green at Prospect House, on the site of the present mantelpiece factory.

A curious story hangs to the name of Hermes Street. Here at his mansion, Hermes Hill, died Dr. Francis de Valangin, M.D. A Swiss by birth, he had come to England from Leyden and practised in Soho Square and the City. About the year 1772 he looked round him for a country house, and pitched upon the green heights of Pentonville. Pink, the historian of Clerkenwell, says that the house he built was more fanciful than convenient. The doctor named it Hermes Hill after Hermes Trismegistus, the Egyptian priest and philosopher, who wrote some forty books on theology, medicine, and geography, and it is this dim figure of the age of Osiris and Isis that is recalled to-day in the murk of Pentonville. It was at Hermes Hill Dr. Valangin discovered his "Balsam of Life," which was sold long after at the Apothecaries' Hall. Here his only daughter died at the age of nine, and was buried under a costly gravestone in the garden. The doctor lived to be eighty.

Hermes Hill obtained notoriety in 1811 as the home of the coal-heaver evangelist, William Huntington, who added the letters S.S. to his name to signify "Sinner Saved." His real name was Hunt, to which

he had added two syllables in order to obscure the record of a youthful folly. Huntington had come to London from Thames Ditton in "two large carts with furniture and other necessaries, beside a post-chaise well filled with children and cats." The coal-heaver made his way in London rapidly. He wrote many books, and was provided by his flock with a chapel in Gray's Inn Lane at a cost of £9000, a gift which he graciously accepted on condition that it was made his own freehold. Here he held forth with noise and unction, varying his discourse by such interruptions as "Wake that snoring sinner! Silence that noisy numskull!" After occupying Hermes Hill for less than two years, he died at Tunbridge Wells in 1813, and the sale of his effects at Pentonville produced some extraordinary scenes. Relic prices were given for trifles. His arm-chair fetched sixty guineas, and his spectacles seven guineas. One man bought a barrel of ale to "remember him by." Huntington himself relied for remembrance on his epitaph, which he dictated thus: "Here lies the Coal Heaver, who departed this life July 1, 1813, in the 69th year of his age, beloved of his God and abhorred by men. The Omniscient Judge, at the Grand Assize, shall ratify and confirm this to the confusion of many thousands; for England and its metropolis shall know that there hath been a Prophet among them.—W. H., S.S." His portrait is in the National Portrait Gallery. It is probable that he did much good in his uncouth way.

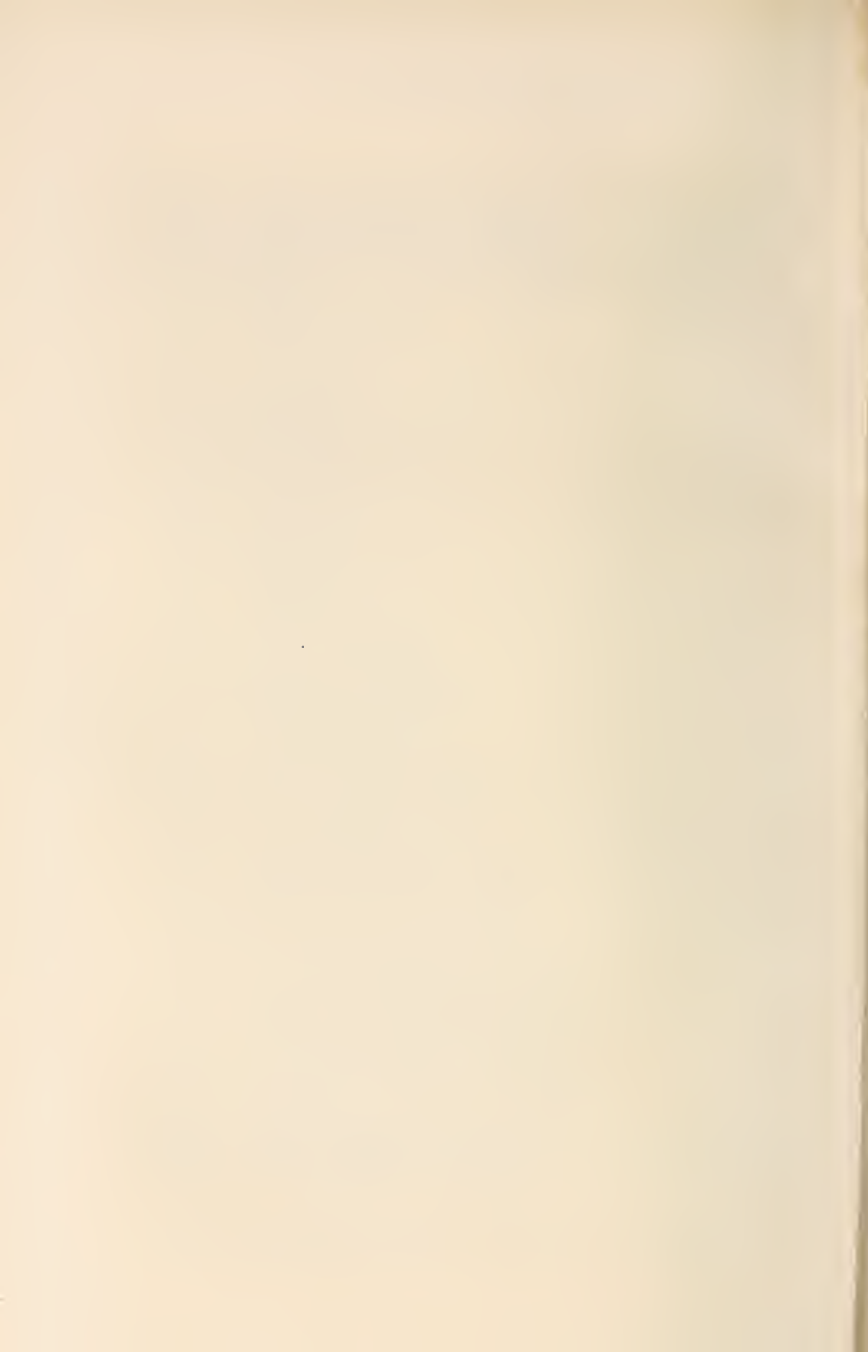
In 1826 it was written in Hone's "Every-Day Book," "Building or what may more properly be termed the tumbling-up of tumble-down houses, to the north of London, is so rapidly increasing, that in a year or two there will scarcely be a green spot for the resort of the inhabitants." Hereabouts Carlyle in his





#### PENTONVILLE HILL

SOMETHING IN THE AIR AND SKY OF THIS REGION MIGHT SUGGEST, IF ONE DID NOT KNOW OF THEM, THE GRASS SLOPES  
OF EARLIER DAYS . . . TEA GARDEN AND BOWLING-GREEN (P. 51)



first London days walked with Edward Irving, and saw "what was or had once been fields, and was again coarsely green in general, but with symptoms of past devastation by bricklayers, who have now doubtless covered it all with their dirty human dog-hutches of the period."

He gave this odd picture of a walk with Irving:—

"In some smoothish spot there suddenly disclosed itself a considerable company of altogether fine-looking young girls, who had set themselves to dance; all in airy bonnets, silks, and flounces, merry, alert, nimble as young fawns, tripping it to their own rhythm on the light fantastic toe, with the bright beams of the setting sun gilding them, and the hum and smoke of huge London shoved aside as foil or background. Nothing could be prettier. At sight of us they suddenly stopped, all looking round; and one of the prettiest, a dainty little thing, stepped radiantly out to Irving. 'Oh! oh! Mr. Irving,' and blushing and smiling offered her pretty lips to be kissed, which Irving gallantly stooped down to accept as well worth while. Whereupon, after some benediction or pastoral words we went our way. Probably I rallied him on such opulence of luck provided for a man, to which he could answer properly as a spiritual shepherd, not a secular."

Seventy years earlier Canaletto, at this spot, or near it, saw London as no smoky background to brick and nettle. Seated on the roof of Prospect House, or at one of the windows, he proceeded to draw a bird's-eye view of London. In a copy before me I see pastures and cows, the detached New River Head, the northern green outskirts, St. Paul's dome and fifty spires, and beyond all the Surrey hills. To-day, Claremont Square and a dun sky.

## CHAPTER III

### LORDS AND LANDLADIES

Feudal Waistcoats—The Duke and his View—Decimus Burton and Major Cartwright—The Making of Bloomsbury—Lady Ellenborough's Flowers—Zachary Macaulay—Capper's Farm—Water - cress—A Gloomy Square—A War on Tips—The Pretender in London—Dying for a Greek Accent—A Question of Taste—Red Lion Mary—Lord Eldon's Peaches—The Field of the Forty Footsteps—Peter Pindar's Cottage—A Recipe for Old Age—The Railway Termini—Agar Town—Morrison's Pills—King's Cross and the Moscow Legend—Art for the Million—The Cottage that Never Was—St. Pancras-le-Gasometer

NOT Islington, but Bloomsbury, is the aviary in which the young Londoner commonly finds his "first perch." I have recalled that in the late Eighties one drove through Bloomsbury with apologetic stealth, sighting the red waistcoats of the Bedford gate-keepers, who reduced the traffic to its lowest common denominator of gentility, which I believe was a four-wheeled cab. To-day, when bishops stand on soap-boxes and peeresses sell hats, it is not to be supposed that feudal waistcoats can endure. Not only have the waistcoats and bars been withdrawn, but the pomp implicit in the one and the exclusiveness enforced by the other have passed out of these fine old streets and squares.

Along its western boundary Bloomsbury has admitted modern "mansions," and these already tower like a wave that must advance by its own weight. As

on the boundaries, so in the centre : Russell Square has renewed its youth, its houses have put on terra-cotta like a garment, the windows are new mullioned, and the doors elegantly gated. Yet compromise goes with restoration, for the presence of two huge modern hotels, one of them named, it is true, after the Russell family and adorned with many a boast of heraldry, destroys without a pang the symmetry of the largest square in London.

Yet Bloomsbury is Bloomsbury still—unique and, on the whole, admirable. It is London's door-mat, breaking the traveller's fall on her stones. How lulling and congratulatory was the roll of the hansom through these linked squares when Euston or St. Pancras had washed its hands of you ! Did I not once sing in the groves of Guilford Street—

For me, for me, these old retreats  
Amid the world of London streets !  
My eye is pleased with all it meets  
In Bloomsbury.

I know how prim is Bedford Park,  
At Highgate oft I've heard the lark ;  
Not these can lure me from an ark  
In Bloomsbury.

I know how green is Peckham Rye,  
And Syd'nham, flashing in the sky ;  
But did I dwell there I should sigh  
For Bloomsbury.

I know where Maida Vale receives  
The night dews on her summer leaves ;  
Not less my settled spirit cleaves  
To Bloomsbury.

Some love the Chelsea river gales,  
And the slow barges' ruddy sails ;  
And these I'll woo when glamour fails  
In Bloomsbury.

Enough for me in yonder square  
To see the perky sparrows pair,  
Or long laburnum gild the air  
In Bloomsbury.

Enough for me, in midnight skies,  
To see the moons of London rise  
And weave their silver fantasies  
In Bloomsbury.

Oh, mine in snows and summer heats,  
These good old Tory brick-built streets!  
My eye is pleased with all it meets  
In Bloomsbury.

Only a duke with a liking for port wine could have planned Bloomsbury. He stood one day in 1756 at a back window of Bedford House, looking northward over the Southampton Fields, his wig awry with passion as he watched a gang of workmen nearly a mile away. They were constructing the New Road from Paddington to the City—now the Euston Road. And the Duke objected. Horace Walpole tells us why. "The Duke of Bedford, who is never in town in the summer, objects to the dust it will make behind Bedford House, and to some buildings proposed, though if he were in town he is too short-sighted to see the prospect."

Bedford House had been an unspoiled paradise. "I have a perfect recollection," says a writer who knew it, "of its venerable grandeur, as I surveyed it in the distance, shaded with the thick foliage of magnificent lime-trees. The fine verdant lawn extended a considerable distance between these, and was guarded by a deep ravine to the north from the intrusive footsteps of the daring, whilst in perfect safety were grazing various breeds of foreign and other cattle." The house was kept and managed with aristocratic perfection, and

we hear of the snow-white livery of its servants. The Duke's family motto, "What will be will be," should have helped him, even though he could not see the Bloomsbury landlady peeping over the hill-tops of Highgate.

In the very dawn of the nineteenth century the construction of the ducal Bloomsbury began. Within seven years the new district had made such progress that a Scotchman walking over it wrote to his friend Constable, the Edinburgh publisher : "Young Faulder and I walked over all the Duke of Bedford's new feuing-grounds—Russell Square, Tavistock Place, Brunswick Square, etc. The extent of these, and the rapidity of the buildings, is beyond all comprehension."

Most of the Bedford squares and streets were built by Decimus Burton, who erected in them no fewer than 922 houses. When the Bedford titles had been exhausted, Burton gave his name to Burton Crescent, where now stands the little-known statue of that fine old liberty-loving fanatic, Major John Cartwright. He is to be seen in bronze on the east side of the crescent, where recently I found him sitting literally under his own fig-tree, by whose branches he was in some danger of being strangled.

The whole story of Bloomsbury and the districts north of it can be read in three maps : Rocque's of 1745, Mogg's of 1806, and Cruchley's of 1845. Let us arrange a few results.

### ROCQUE, 1745.

In this map, made eleven years before the construction of the New Road from Paddington to Battle's Bridge (King's Cross), Bedford House is seen presenting its back windows to the upward-rolling fields,



in which St. Pancras is clustered round its small old church, and Highgate shows as a remote hill-top village. All the ground on which Bloomsbury now stands is included under the name Lamb's Conduit Fields. Only Great Russell Street, Southampton Row, Bloomsbury Square, Queen's Square (named after Queen Anne), and Great Ormond Street are seen.

The Foundling Hospital stands lonely in the fields, in which there are many ponds.

The Tottenham Court Road is a country lane in which Whitefield's first tabernacle stands on the brink of a lake, not named on the map, but identical with the sheet of water which the strolling Londoners of the period called the "Little Sea." Near the chapel stood a few cottages called Paradise Row, and a turnstile opening into Crab Tree Fields, or Crab and Walnut Fields, extending up to Tottenham Court and its Adam and Eve Tavern. A person standing on the future site of Tavistock Square in 1745 looked east over unbroken fields to the northern edge of Clerkenwell, and westward to old Marylebone. To the north-west he could see the roofs of Islington crowning a green hill.

MOGG, 1806.

Bedford House is gone and Russell Square is built. The Tottenham Court Road is lined on both sides with its present offshoots, but Gower Street reaches only half-way to the New Road. Of the squares and streets between Russell Square and the New (Euston) Road, only Tavistock Square is begun. But Guilford Street, Bernard Street, Great Coram Street, and Tavistock Place have been completed.

The New Road between the "Adam and Eve" and King's Cross is still rural, though Somers Town has

sprung up. Where Endsleigh Gardens now is, a large nursery-ground is seen, and opposite the site of the future St. Pancras Station is a bowling-green.

The sites of Hunter Street, Judd Street, and all their tributaries are open pasture as far as Gray's Inn Lane.

Camden Town is a small place thinly enveloping a portion of the Hampstead Road.

#### CRUCHLEY, 1845.

The modern Bloomsbury is made up, and the Euston Road, still called the New Road, is completely urban. Regent's Park has been formed, Camden Town and Kentish Town are organic continuations of London, and the London and Birmingham Railway is running into Euston Square. A reservoir occupies the site of Tolmers Square.

As Rocque's map has shown us, the lower portions of the district were of older date than the Bedford suburb proper, and recent rebuildings have afforded sudden glimpses of an antique and picturesque Bloomsbury which artists have been quick to seize. The north side of the Queen Square, with railings in Guilford Street, was left open in order that the residents might enjoy the view to Highgate. Southampton Row was old enough to have been the home of the poets Gray and Cowper. In Bloomsbury Square lived Lord Ellenborough, whose wife, the daughter of a naval officer named Towry, was so beautiful that passers-by would linger to watch her water the flowers on her balcony, a pretty picture saved from the time when the gardens in Great Russell Street, and about, were noted for the perfume of their flowers.

One of the most interesting but least-known spots in

this lower region is the recreation-ground formed out of the old burial-grounds of St. George the Martyr and St. George's, Bloomsbury. It lies behind the Foundling Hospital and is best approached from the Bloomsbury squares by Handel Street, or from the Gray's Inn Road by Wakefield Street. "Here lies Nancy Dawson." Her gravestone, which is said to have borne these words, has disappeared, but it is possible that it is only buried out of sight. Twenty years ago, when the recreation-ground was formed, search was made for interesting gravestones, and that of Zachary Macaulay, father of Lord Macaulay, is now erected on the green-sward. That the grave of this remarkable man should have been lost, and the recovery of its stone be a matter of chance, are surprising facts, yet they consort with the almost painful shrinking from reward and recognition that marked the Abolitionist's character and saddened some of his friends. It was said of him, without exaggeration, that he "sacrificed all that a man may lawfully sacrifice—health, fortune, repose, and celebrity." Forty years ago Sir George Otto Trevelyan, in his *Life of Lord Macaulay*, wrote in the spirit of his subject: "Even now, when he (Zachary Macaulay) has been in his grave more than the third of a century, it seems almost an act of disloyalty to record the public services of a man who thought he had done less than nothing if his exertion met with praise, or even with recognition." Yet Trevelyan believed—and his statement has not been corrected in recent editions—that Zachary Macaulay had received the praise and recognition implied in *burial* in Westminster Abbey. It is a generous slip in a classic biography. There is a further confusion in regard to the epitaph. For the inscription quoted in the biography as the inscription in the Abbey is not there. Written by Sir James Stephen, it

was not considered suitable for the Abbey cenotaph, however true. Indeed, its concluding words could not, perhaps, have been properly inscribed where so many of Zachary Macaulay's co-workers are honoured: "Meekly endured the Toil, the Privation, the Reproach, resigning to Others the Praise and the Reward." But merit, like murder, will out, and there is now a scheme to erect a church at Clapham to the memory of Zachary Macaulay.

The old rural Bloomsbury lives in John Thomas Smith's account of a farm which stood behind Great Russell Street, and was occupied by two sisters named Capper. One of them rode her fields on a grey mare, and took a spiteful pleasure in cutting with a pair of shears the strings of the boys' kites. The wooden pipes of the New River Company crossed the fields raised on trestles, and beneath their drippings water-cress grew plentifully.

It is in Red Lion Square that the past of all this region seems to collect its shadows. The impression of something a little alien and sinister is felt in this oblong precinct, in which the tall old houses, now turned to commercial uses, look down on the children's playground. The garden was thrown open in 1885, and for some years there was a dovecote in the centre, but it has disappeared. This dovecote stood on or near the site of an obelisk that was supposed to mark the spot where the bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw were secretly burned after their mutilation at Tyburn. The story has no support. Yet when the square was built it seemed at once to take on a ghostly air; an eighteenth-century writer declared that he never went into it without thinking of his latter end. "The dreary length of the sides, with the four watch-houses like so many family vaults

at the corners, and the naked obelisk that springs from amidst the rank grass, like the sad monument of a disconsolate widow for the loss of her first husband, form altogether a *memento mori*, more powerful to me than a death's-head and cross marrow-bones."

The square has more cheerful associations. Every one knows that Jonas Hanway, the hero of the umbrella, lived here. A less-remembered resident is Dr. William King, whose "Political and Literary Anecdotes" is one of those books that are paradoxically more quoted than read. It was King who brought to Dr. Johnson his Master of Arts Diploma from Oxford. He died in 1763, and his reminiscences, which came to light long after his death, are full of the London life of his day. He shared with Hanway a strong objection to the exaction of tips, or vails, by servants from the guests at great houses. It was at Newcastle House, no farther than Lincoln's Inn Fields, that this custom was temporarily scotched by Sir Timothy Waldo. "Sir, I do not take silver," said the cook. "Don't you, then I do not give gold." Hanway made the incident the text of his philippic. Dr. King whimsically suggested that a notice should be placed, in large gold letters, over the door of every man of rank, as follows: "The Fees for Dining Here are Three Half Crowns (or Ten Shillings) to be Paid to the Porter on Entering the House, Peers or Peeresses to Pay What More They Think Proper."

Dr. King was one of the few who were privy to the secret visits to London of Prince Charles, the Pretender, whom he met in 1750 at Lady Primrose's house. He stayed in London only five days. King says that his busts, which were then being commonly





### BLOOMSBURY BACKS

REBUILDINGS HAVE AFFORDED SUDDEN GLIMPSES OF AN ANTIQUE AND PICTURESQUE BLOOMSBURY (P. 50)





sold in London, were more like him than any painted portrait he had seen. He came one evening to King's lodgings to drink tea, and it would appear that this was during the doctor's stay in Red Lion Square. "My servant, after he was gone, said to me, 'that he thought my new visitor very like Prince Charles.' 'Why,' said I, 'have you ever seen Prince Charles?' 'No, sir,' replied the fellow, 'but this gentleman, whoever he may be, exactly resembles the busts which are sold in Red Lion Street, and are said to be the busts of Prince Charles.' The truth is, these busts were taken in plaster of Paris from his face."

Among King's London stories is one that might have appealed to Browning. Two gentlemen differed about the accent of a Greek word in a coffee-house in Devereux Court, in the Strand, and carried their dispute to the length of stepping out into the court to end it with their swords—which they did effectually, for one of them was run through, and died on the spot.

Like Hanway, the doctor was something of a pioneer; his book is one of the earliest examples of "reminiscence" literature in our modern sense; an exemplar, too, by reason of its union of brevity with a certain quality and finish of anecdote. King did not trawl his life and correspondence for stories, but wrote down those that had dwelt in his mind as significant. To his account of the Devereux Court duel he appends a grotesque example of that tinder-like susceptibility to offence which often led to tragic encounters. Two Englishmen arranged to travel together through Europe for three or four years. They took out passports and letters of credit, recommendations, etc., settled all their affairs, and crossed the Channel. Within a week they were sitting down

in Brussels to a supper of a woodcock and a partridge. A question arose as to which bird they should cut first, and they found themselves at variance on this point of gastronomy. The argument became such a heated quarrel that they renounced their travelling project, and parting next morning returned to England, one by Calais and the other through Holland. Six months later, King encountered one of these gentlemen, who was his friend, and asked him if it was true they had set out to do the Grand Tour and had quarrelled in the first week over a woodcock and a partridge. "Very true," was the vehement answer, "and did you ever know such an absurd fellow as E——, who insisted on cutting up a woodcock before a partridge."

King tells us that he asked many of his contemporaries whether they would care to live their lives over again, and "never heard one man of sense answer in the affirmative." The gloom of Red Lion Square may have attuned his mind to such inquiries. On the other hand it may have deepened his love of the four best things he recognized in life: "Old wine to drink, old wood to burn, old books to read, and old friends to converse with."

But the little square has its modern associations. At No. 17, in a house whose successor bears a tablet of commemoration, lived and wrought William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Here the Morris movement in decoration was born. And here flourished Red Lion Mary. It is fitting that a servant girl's name should be linked to a Bloomsbury square, and Red Lion Mary seems to have deserved her destiny. She was a plain person, of much character and unfailing good humour—imperturbable, in fact. Rossetti one day bounded into

the room, strode up to her, and in tragic tones and with fearful meaning in his voice, exclaimed :—

Shall the hide of a fierce lion  
Be stretched on a couch of wood,  
For a daughter's foot to lie on,  
Stained with a father's blood?

The girl, quite unawed by the horrible proposition, replied with complacency, "It shall if you like, sir." Rossetti described the rooms as "intensely mediæval" with tables and chairs "like incubi and succubi."

For a picture he was then designing Burne-Jones might have been seen—wonderful as it seems—painting lilies from specimens that grew in the garden of the square. This was a happy year: "Blue summer," he wrote, "from Christmas to Christmas, and London streets glittered, and it was always morning, and the air sweet and full of bells."

Residence in Bloomsbury was long valued for its happy mingling of town convenience with country pleasures. Mrs. Siddons bought a house in Gower Street, of which she wrote, "The back of it is most effectually in the country." Lord Eldon was proud of the grapes which he obtained from his vine at No. 42, though later he would speak in open court of the injury done to them by the increasing smoke of London. It is recorded that as late as 1800, at No. 6 Gower Street, the tenant had twenty-five dozen of fine nectarines and abundance of celery. And Gower Street still yields fruit in its season. In 1906, in Gower Place, close to the Underground Station, a vine growing on a begrimed house bore four or five bunches of purple grapes. This vine, which is piously believed to have been taken from a Hampton Court parent, is about thirty years old. In 1905 it

bore twenty-two bunches of grapes, and in 1904 more than forty. Long after Gower Street ceased to reward the husbandman's labour it remained a very quiet street, and, as such, agreeable to Charles Darwin, who remarked that "if one is quiet in London, there is nothing like its quietness—there is a grandeur about its smoky fogs, and the dull, distant sounds of cabs and coaches."

Near Torrington Square and the ground covered by the new extension of the British Museum was the legendary "Field of the Forty Footsteps." The story goes that at about the time of the Monmouth Rebellion two brothers fought to the death in the fields on which Bloomsbury now stands, for the hand of a lady, who sat on a bank and watched them spill each other's blood, until both fell to rise no more. Tradition said that the place where this engaging young woman sat, and the footprints made by the two swordsmen, never produced grass again. It was a fine story for Cockney lovers to gloat upon when they walked abroad on Sunday mornings in the fields north of London. They trod piously in the Footsteps, enjoying something akin to Flaubert's "historic shudder." Nor were Cockney lovers the only folk hypnotized by these strange marks in the grass. The poet Southey searched for them diligently. He found them adjoining a pond "about three-quarters of a mile north of Montagu House, and 500 yards east of Tottenham Court Road." He not only saw the Footsteps, seventy-six in number, but he gravely concurred in the opinion that "the Almighty has ordered them as a standing monument of his great displeasure of the horrid sin of duelling." Where, exactly, were these Footsteps, visited and brooded on by hundreds of thousands of eighteenth-

century Londoners? Writing more than fifty years ago in "Notes and Queries," Dr. Rimbault stated that common repute located them at the extreme end of Upper Montagu Street, and at its north-east corner. In other words, they were at the south end of Woburn Square. A man who might have fixed the locality to a nicety was old Joseph Moser, whose "Vestiges" dragged their slow length through the "European Magazine." He saw the last of the Footsteps on 16 June, 1800, and noted in his diary, "the building materials are there to cover them from the sight of men."

University College and the Hospital stand on ground formerly known as Hope Field, in the occupation of a Mr. Mortimer. The field covered twelve acres, and in it was a pound; also a rope-walk, and a row of cottages known as Mortimer's Folly. Mortimer Market, that odd little purlieu of the Tottenham Court Road, took its name from the owner of the field.

It was to enjoy this open country about the New Road, and the smell of garden and nursery flowers, that Dr. Wolcot (Peter Pindar) took Montgomery Cottage in which to spend his last days in peace. He had done tormenting poor George the Third in verse and prose, and he looked back on his exploits with pride rather than penitence. When an old lady gently asked him whether he did not think that he had been a bad subject of King George, he replied, "I do not know anything about that, madam; but I do know that the King has been a devilish good subject for me." Wolcot had now done belabouring the Royal Academy in his famous "Odes," but he liked to see young artists with whom he sympathized, and above his chimney-piece hung a relic of the man whose claims he had championed with insight and courage, a glow-



ing landscape by Richard Wilson. He now grew old, and looked back on a life in which contention and dissipation had played dominant parts. His hand had been against every man, and every man's hand had been lifted in reprisal. He now brought his blindness and other infirmities to the Euston Road, before that street name was known, because he "loved the smell of flowers, and the fresh air of the place." In Montgomery Cottage he often spoke to Cyrus Redding of the consolations of age. "You have seen something of life in your time. See and learn all you can more. You will fall back upon it when you grow old—an old fool is an inexcusable fool to himself and others—store up all ; our acquirements are most useful when we become old." His recipe for length of days was simple : "Take care of your stomach, one dish will do for any man ; take plain food ; keep yourself from damp. I keep a fire every day throughout the year. I must have dry air. I wear a flannel shirt—it is needful, and I take a little brandy or rum. Fire, flannel, and brandy are required in our climate."

The name Euston Grove, borne by houses almost within the station precincts, recalls Peter Pindar's fields and flowers. Here lived, at one time, Edward Irving. Close by, in Euston Square, at No. 11, Charles Aders entertained Lamb, and Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Flaxman. The walls of the parlour were hung with religious pictures, chiefly of the German school, on which Lamb looked with quiet appreciation : hence his lines :—

Whoever enters here no more presume,  
To name a parlour or a drawing-room ;  
But bending lowly to each holy story,  
Make this thy Chapel and thy Oratory.



Parlour or oratory, its walls heard William Blake explain his pictures as dictations of the Eternal Spirit. Crabb Robinson said, "You express yourself as Socrates used to do. What resemblance do you suppose there is between your spirit and his?" He answered, "I was Socrates—a sort of brother. I must have had conversations with him. So I had with Jesus Christ. I have an obscure recollection of having been with both of them."

The early Bloomsbury was connected with the New Road by a private lane belonging to the Duke of Bedford (now Woburn Place), and more or less directly by field-paths. To-day, Bloomsbury is a caravanseraï at the thresholds of three great railway termini. In 1837, the portico of Euston Station, the most massive thing of its kind in these islands, was being built of Bramley Fall stone at a cost of £30,000. Single blocks of the stone composing it weighed as much as thirteen tons. The least necessary building in London may survive all others. On 20 July, 1837, the London and Birmingham Railway was opened as far as Boxmoor. It was primitive railway travel. The third-class passengers stood in open carriages and were covered with dust and cinders from the engines, indeed the guard, riding on the top of the carriage, had difficulty to prevent his clothes catching fire. The track was laid on stone blocks instead of sleepers, and the clatter of the train was deafening. The bugle sounded in the stations.

It had been difficult to obtain Parliamentary sanction for the construction of a terminus so far within London as Euston Grove, and for about ten years no locomotive was allowed to approach nearer than Chalk Farm. Thence to Euston the trains ran down an inclined plane under the control of brakesmen, and in the outward journey they were hauled to Chalk Farm on an

endless rope. "A ship going into harbour," says an observer of the period, "is not treated with more caution than a train meets with on being led into the metropolis; like that, too, it must have its special pilots, the bank-riders, as they are called, a small body of men who do nothing but this; from Euston Square to Camden Town, and from Camden Town to Euston Square is the extent of their travels; and very absolute their dominions are."

Such was Euston in its infancy. Yet the future of the station was foreseen. Planned on a gigantic scale, it has not been spoiled by piecemeal additions. The great waiting-hall at Euston is the temple of British railway enterprise. But it is a severe temple. When G. F. Watts, noting its splendid wall expanses, wished to decorate these with frescoes at his own cost, the directors declined his offer on the ground that it was not their function to provide art for travellers. The hall is now therefore adorned by its own proportions, and by Baily's overwhelming statue of George Stephenson.

The note of St. Pancras Station differs from that of Euston: a later stage of railway history is reflected. This terminus was completed only in 1871, by which time railway travelling had developed the need of the railway hotel. St. Pancras gave to that idea its first colossal embodiment. Its vast Gothic hotel masks the station, and lends the terminus a certain withdrawn and middle-class sanctity. You enter the station on precise behaviour, and may even feel a half-doubt whether you are fully welcome to use it without knowing a Director, or at least a guard who remembers your uncle William. Yet no railway is more hospitable or does more for your comfort. It is not by accident that on the main platform at St. Pancras there is a barber's

shop, and an office for the sale of theatre tickets. Unlike Euston, the station is a visible whole. Its immense roof is built of girders 240 feet in span, incredibly supported by the distant walls from which they spring. To descend from St. Pancras Station into the Euston Road is like coming out of church into a shabby weekday world.

King's Cross Great Northern Station the man in the street admires less than the architect. It has the neat merit of appearing to be exactly what it is. Unlike Euston and St. Pancras, this station wades in the London traffic. The engine which has just pulled in the Edinburgh express is cooling off a dozen yards from the bus that climbs to Pentonville. King's Cross Station is a terminus reduced to simple terms : platforms and a roof. No. 1 platform at King's Cross is, perhaps, the best departure platform in London, the neatest, straightest, most amenable and correct. It is rash to say so, because these are the questions which divide families.

Both St. Pancras and King's Cross have curious hinterlands. Somers Town is a kind of Bloomsbury, with gasometers to represent the British Museum. On its site Cæsar is said to have encamped, but his commentary is lacking. The rise of the district was due to an influx of refugees from the French Revolution. The immediate site of St. Pancras Station was styled Agar Town, after its owner, Councillor Agar, but Dickens called it a "suburban Connemara." He, or one of his "Household Words" contributors, relates that a lady occupying one of the "built o' Sunday mornin's" tenements, on being asked whether there was any sewer connected therewith, replied, "Oh no ! Lord bless you, we've none o' them nasty things hereabouts !"

As the west end of the Euston Road runs to tomb-

stones, so its King's Cross end caters for illness and funerals. For many years a glazed obelisk has informed the passers-by what it costs to be buried in nine degrees of pomp. Moreover, the arrived countryman is awed by a large square building adorned by a sculptured lion on its roof, and by another lion majestically couchant in its garden. This is the "British College of Health." Erected in 1828 by Mr. James Morrison, it is the home of Morrison's Pills, a remedy of such favour in its day that it was frequently mentioned in "Punch," and was a property of the political cartoonist. In a "Figaro" cartoon the Duke of Wellington was pictured in the act of taking the Reform Bill in the shape of a Morrison pill, while being held down by Earl Grey and Lord John Russell. The founder of the institution and the pill was an Aberdonian, who became a merchant at Riga and in the West Indies. Scourged by ill-health he sought his own remedies, and then dealt in them with great profit. The "Hygiest" died in Paris in 1840, at the age of seventy. In the last ten years of his life he had paid £60,000 to the British Government for medicine stamps, and his pills had an immense sale in France. He wrote various pamphlets; one bore the title, "Some Important Advice to the World, or the Way to Prevent and Cure the Diseases incident to the Human Frame—by James Morrison, Gent. (Not a Doctor.)"

To King's Cross belongs the flattering legend that Moscow was rebuilt, after the holocaust of 1812, on London rubbish. An immense cinder-heap stood on ground now covered by the shops at the head of the Gray's Inn Road. It consisted of horse-bones, cinders, and mud; and, according to Walford, it was "the haunt of innumerable pigs." Dead grain and hop-husks were also shot here, and on Sunday

mornings there was much Cockney horse-play. The statement that in 1826 these rubbish-heaps were sold to Russia "to help to rebuild Moscow" (Walford), or "for making bricks to rebuild Moscow" (Hone), would bear a little more proof than it has received. One would suppose that after its baptism of fire Moscow was not short of debris. Hone's contemporary statement is as scanty as all the later ones, of which it seems to be the father.

The King's Cross—for there was a Cross—dated only from 1820. In that year Mr. William Forrester Bray cast a speculative eye on the Battle Bridge region, and with the assistance of other capitalists built more than sixty houses at an outlay of £40,000. But the name of Battle Bridge, glorious enough in its origin, had become associated with all manner of rascality, and the houses were in consequence difficult to let. Mr. Bray and his partners consulted about a change of name. "St. George's Cross" was suggested, and also "Boadicea's Cross," but Mr. Bray, the largest builder, preferred that the locality should be known as "King's Cross" in honour of George IV. This was agreed to. The structure—described as a ridiculous octagonal affair, sixty feet high, with a statue of George IV above and a police-station below—was taken down, unhonoured, though not unsung, in 1845. Its site is the ventilator of the subway nearest Gray's Inn Road.

In such surroundings one looks about for something that will strike even a moderate bliss upon the day. For many years a cheap art shop has provided a hint of happier things in this miscellaneous turmoil. Its window has always been filled with original oil and water-colour pictures, mostly landscapes, of which the prices range from five shillings to two guineas. No



"schools" or "experiments" ever influence the statement of English landscape of which they make affidavit. From this shop-window, and many others of which it is a type, I have learned that the pictorial object which is most dear to the London masses, transfiguring the prose of the streets, is an original oil-picture of an English cottage. But to be worth twelve-and-sixpence, a price it often bears, the cottage must answer to the sentiment of forgotten songs and faded almanacs, to the wood-cuts in early Victorian prize-books, and to a personal and inherited prepossession that defies analysis. The cottage of Barnsbury's dream and Pentonville's long desire is described in one of Joanna Baillie's poems—

E'en now, methinks,  
Each little cottage of my native vale  
Swells out its earthen sides, upheaves its roof,  
Like to a hillock moved by labouring mole,  
And with green trail-weeds clambering up its walls.

Whenever I contemplate this accepted art I recall a South London room in which three of us on a Sunday morning would look out on the cheerful street through dangling autumn leaves twenty-five years ago. We were of progressive ages and different walks in life. Blakely was a retired clergyman of the Church of England, a lonely man of dry utterance, whom I rarely saw during the week save in the stress of putting on or taking off his overcoat. He would sit in that rather ill-ventilated dining-room until a walk to Camberwell Green presented itself to him as a novel and seductive enterprise, and then he walked until the hearth resumed its lure. He had anecdote, and I became impressed by the great number of his fellow-creatures whom he had buried in wet weather. We





# IN RED LION SQUARE

AT NO. 17 LIVED AND WORKED WILLIAM MORRIS, EDWARD BURNE-JONES, AND DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, AND HERE FLOURISHED RED LION MARY (P. 64)



liked him well: I, not least, for his profuse and beneficial practice of taking in the "Spectator." For, on Sunday mornings Blakely's "Spectator" brought my friend Skald over from Peckham to join me in envious dissection of the contemplative poems which that journal accepted, in preference to our own scare-songs of revolt. It was thus that we two encountered Pincot, most radiant and bald-headed of artists.

Pincot was a producer of those rheumatic cottages with very obese chimneys and very thin columns of blue smoke, and those rural churches like hummocks of mould, which are the staple subject-matter of the people's oils. He worked with stupendous yet light-hearted industry in his room at the top of the house, where, as we came to understand, he had several books which he read and one photograph which he cherished.

Pincot was prepared to extend a rushy pond to the crack of doom, or at least to any probable wall-space over the piano, and his ancient rooks circling over the ivied church and away into amber empyreans of Sabbath, always seemed to announce a parson who had never seen a Dissenter. On the other hand, he would attentuate an upright picture with an eye equally faithful to parlour proportions. This would represent poplars rising out of rushes with perpendicular reflections in the water broken by a punt, while in the mauve mist of an exiguous sky appeared a cottage gable not seen before by gods or wondering men.

"But why," Skald at last inquired, "do you always paint the same picture?"

"Why does God raise the same resplendent sun above the same hill-tops every morning, Mr. Skald? Same picture! Ah, my young friends, if you knew

the delight of putting ducks into different positions on a pond ! There are thousands of ways of doing it—I say there are *thousands*—and to me every single one of them is a little intimate dream.”

“Yes, yes, Mr. Pincot, it is the ducks I am thinking about—you give them the time of their lives—but these cottages of yours are always knee-deep in water. They drip. Their thatches ferment. Dem’d damp, moist, and unpleasant, you know. I’m only quoting Dickens, Mr. Pincot.”

“Dickens ! I have read every single word of Saint Boz, and it is the dream of my life to keep an Old Curiosity Shop. Then I would sit in the back parlour and create. As it is, I am connected with a very nice firm—we are like brothers—and I paint like this to oblige them. I would not disoblige them, Mr. Skald, for ten thousand pounds. But I *have* created. I should like you to have seen my picture, ‘The Cattle upon a Thousand Hills,’ but it fell short of my dream and it was too big to keep. I have been a dreamer, and that’s the reason—that’s the reason of it all.”

“I didn’t mean to be—critical, Mr. Pincot.”

“No, no, and I don’t mind you saying my cottages are rheumatic, Mr. Skald. Mr. Blakely says he would not dare to preach in my church—St. Mildew’s, he calls it—but I do not mind that either. No, because I no longer paint my dreams, but I paint to make the people dream theirs.”

Thus exalting and thus humbling himself, chirruping, sighing, and smiling by turns, Pincot would capture our hearts. I still see his paintings in certain shops. But are they his ? Impossible to identify works in which personality is so nobly sunk in duck-ponds. He did not paint something “as he saw it,” and call it Nature, or something not in Nature and call it

sensation. All I know is that the bells still knoll to church over those lush fields, the first bulrush in the foreground is still broken, the ducks still challenge permutation without revealing Pincot. And still the rooks of a feudal England wheel in a sky that secures the love and wistfulness of many humble and lowly men of heart.

Just such a country church as the poor town-dweller loves was for centuries the spiritual home and the last God's acre of all this region. "Pancras Church," says Norden, writing in Shakespeare's lifetime, "standeth all alone, as utterly forsaken old and wether-beten, which for the antiquity thereof is thought not to yield to Paule's in London." In 1777 John Thomas Smith came here with his father and some young pupils to sketch. He tells us that the churchyard was enclosed only by an old hand-railing in some parts covered with docks and nettles, and that from it he had a perfect view of Whitefield's Chapel, Montague House, and Bedford House. And this old church, much restored and disguised, yet in size and suggestion a country church, is still to be found among the gasometers of St. Pancras.

A great roll-call of its dead is inscribed on a monument in the churchyard, and many of the lost epitaphs have been collected. They include such interesting names as Pope's Martha Blount, General Paoli, Woollett the engraver, Jeremy Collier, John Walker of the "Pronouncing Dictionary," Ned Ward of the "London Spy," and the Chevalier d'Eon. Here was buried in 1797 Mary Wolstonecraft Godwin, who had died at her home in the Polygon, Somers Town, after giving birth to the daughter who became the second wife of Shelley. It was in 1813 that Shelley, distracted by his alienation from his wife, met

Mary Godwin, then a beautiful girl of sixteen, at the grave of her mother. In her "Memorials," Lady Shelley writes : "Shelley's anguish, his isolation, his difference from other men, his gifts of genius and eloquent enthusiasm had already made a deep impression upon her." When they met in this churchyard he "in burning words poured forth the tale of his wild past—how he had suffered, how he had been misled, and how, if supported by her love, he hoped in future years to enrol his name with the wise and good who had done battle for their fellow-men, and be true through all adverse storms to the cause of humanity. Unhesitatingly she placed her hand in his and linked her fortune with his own."

Time was when one Londoner could say to another, "As many all-hails to thy person as there be haicookes in July at Pancredge." To-day the church, bereft of half its graves, overshadowed by gasometers, environed by railways and coal-yards, is a place of pilgrimage to few ; but its churchyard has been made into a recreation-ground, that the porter's child may not play on the hole of the asp or the coal-heaver's child put his hand on the cockatrice' den.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE CITY MAN'S CITY

The Street called Broad—A Forgotten Burial-ground—Before Harley Street—Sir Astley Cooper in Broad Street—The Importance of being Charles—The Five Great Drugs—Dr. Gardner's "Last and Best Bedroom"—The Resurrection Men—A Home of Learning—The Devil or Dr. Bull—Mead and Radcliffe—Queen Anne is dead—"Rejected Addresses"—The Rothschild—"Happy! Me happy?"—A Bitter Farewell—Macaulay's Playground—Death in Tokenhouse Yard—A Great Auctioneer—Jack Ellis—The Poet of Cornhill—The Hosier of Freeman's Court—Samuel Rogers in the City—Dodson and Fogg—Thackeray in Cornhill—William Wynne Ryland—The Immortal Tailor—The Cornhill Pump—"Patty-pan" Birch—The East India House—How to apply for an Appointment—A Head from the Tower—"Those that encamp toward the East"—Spitalfields—The Uttermost Parts

**T**O know modern London it is necessary to have eaten one's bread in Bloomsbury and to have earned it in the City. Let us then go to the City. Nowhere has its day a more visible beginning than in front of Broad Street and Liverpool Street Stations. Dr. Johnson's opinion that the full tide of human existence is seen at Charing Cross must stand; but here, surely, is the other pole of London's activity.

Old Broad Street—which is not more broad than Water Lane is wet—is casually regarded by most Londoners as the first stretch in a great bus route westward. Nor does Broad Street suggest outwardly

that it has a long memory. Its soaring black stone buildings, rising to a sky crossed and fretted by wires, do not whisper enchantments under the City's moon. Yet here and there a stately red-brick building begins to assert a gracious incongruity, and a glimpse up a narrow court or through a tall archway corrects the first sense of surly monotony.

Broad Street Station was built on the site of a graveyard, where some sixty years ago the skulls of dead Bedlamites were thrown up on the spade. Some, not all. A number were carelessly left, and have been turned up since in strange surroundings. No later than 1890 a Londoner wrote: "A few months ago I happened to be on one of the platforms of the Broad Street Station, where extensive alterations are being carried out (it was in the evening), and whilst waiting for a train one of the newsboys came up and asked me if I would like a 'skeleton's head'; and, pointing to a large heap of earth, etc., said, 'There are lots of bones and skulls there.' Not exactly realizing for the moment what he meant, I said 'No'; but afterwards I remembered the old burying-ground, and concluded that these were some of the remains which had not been carefully carted away."<sup>1</sup>

Almost within living memory Broad Street has been a veritable Harley Street in its attraction for the most humane of the professions. At one time no fewer than twenty medical men lived and practised in it. Nothing better illustrates the change which came over the social life of the City in the early part of the last century than the flitting to the west end of the town of the physicians and surgeons who thrived in Finsbury Square, Finsbury Pavement, and the Broad Street and Bishopsgate Street regions. The medical

<sup>1</sup> "Notes and Queries," 25 October, 1890.

centre of gravity in London was then as definitely in the east<sup>1</sup> as it is now in the west, and it was quite in the order of things that Sir Astley Cooper should earn as much as £21,000 in a single year in Broad Street. But the tale of removals to the West End became ever longer. Thus Dr. John Fothergill built up his great reputation in Lombard Street, and spent his later and more leisured years in Harper Street, Bloomsbury. Henry Cline, the great surgeon, moved from St. Mary Axe to Lincoln's Inn Fields; Dr. Robert Gooch from Aldermanbury to Berner's Street; and Sir Astley Cooper from New Broad Street to Spring Gardens.

Sir Astley Cooper's period in Broad Street has the centenary interest, for he was in full practice there in 1813. The street was then much more domestic, and correspondingly more cheerful, than it is to-day.

"While my uncle was living in Broad Street," says his nephew and biographer, "many, if not most, of the first merchants in London had residences in the City; those who had also houses in the country leaving London generally on the Friday evening, and returning on the following Monday or Tuesday morning;<sup>2</sup> so that the appearance of many streets to the eastward of St. Paul's is now so different as hardly to permit them to be recognized by anyone familiar with them in those days. Most of the great houses which, at the present day, have their street doors open for more speedy access to the common stairs, which

<sup>1</sup> The Royal College of Physicians, now of Pall Mall, was founded in Knightrider Street by Linacre, and flourished for centuries in Warwick Lane, near Paternoster Row.

<sup>2</sup> The prevalence of the "week-end habit" at the close of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries could be demonstrated in a manner that would surprise many who hastily judge it to be a mere modern frivolity.

again lead to numerous offices on the several floors were then private mansions, exhibiting abundant signs of the wealth and magnificence of their proprietors.

"In the evening the light over every door in the best streets, and Broad Street was among the number, the carriages of visitors, and the illuminated windows of the houses in which parties were assembled, gave them an appearance which is now only to be observed in the more modern parts of the metropolis."

Cooper's house stood at the west corner of Bishopsgate Churchyard, now called Church Passage. The older name may still be seen within the archway leading out of New Broad Street. His stables and dissecting laboratory were in the passage. The Cerberus with whom every anxious caller had to reckon was Dr. Cooper's faithful Charles, whose duty it was to introduce the patients in the proper order, and then to extract them from the consulting-room with due speed. For the latter process Charles used the dental term *drawing*, and it was his opinion that it was more difficult to draw one woman than two men. "A gentleman, sir," was Charles's signal to a tedious patient to depart when he thought that enough of his master's time had been occupied. Often it was a sheer impossibility to pass all the patients through the consulting-room before one o'clock, at which hour it was imperative that the physician should go to Guy's Hospital. Delay was impossible, and therefore Charles, who had spent the morning in deferring hope, had now to allay heart-sickness, which he did with happy tact—telling the residue of patients that if they came early next morning they would have the advantage of his master's freshest judgment. On some mornings the final tangle in Broad Street was unusually difficult,

and Sir Astley would escape through the back-yard into the stables, and thence into the passage by the side of Bishopsgate Church and so into Wormwood Street, where his coachman, who understood the plot, presently followed him.

Cooper's patients paid him liberal fees, and his receipts were increased by the circumstance that they seldom paid him in cash. Most paid by cheque, and the acute physician appreciated the fact that patients who would be chary of taking two or three guineas out of their pockets cheerfully wrote a cheque for five. From certain wealthy patients he derived great profit. Mr. Coles, a great Mincing Lane merchant, paid him £600 a year. Another patient, a neighbour in Broad Street, whom he had insisted on attending only in the way of friendship, took a ticket in a lottery which fetched £2000, and this sum he sent to Cooper, insisting that this too was given in friendship. When Mr. Hyatt, a West Indian merchant, had to undergo an operation, he gave Doctors Lettsom and Nelson £300 each, and then jovially flung his nightcap at Cooper, who found in it a cheque for a thousand guineas.

All Sir Astley's prescriptions were simple, and he said: "Give me opium, tartarized antimony, sulphate of magnesia, calomel, and bark, and I would ask for little else; these are adequate to restore all the actions of the body, if there be power of constitution to admit of the restoration." So great was the magic of Astley Cooper's name that a fraudulent medical gang or syndicate exploited the name Dr. *Ashley* Cooper and, setting up a quack establishment in Charlotte Street, Blackfriars Road, achieved for a time a considerable success. A good foil to this affair was the calling in of Cooper by another quack when he lay ill.



His biographer tells the story : "Mr. Cooper was sent for by Dr. G——, an advertising quack in Shoreditch, whose windows announced in capital letters THE UNIVERSAL REMEDY UNDER GOD. Before examining the injury, my uncle began to banter him, suggesting a trial of the Universal Remedy. 'Come, come, Dr. Cooper,' replied G——, '*this* is a serious affair.'" I have no doubt that the "Dr. G——" here referred to was Dr. John Gardner, who had his shop just below Shoreditch, in Norton Folgate, where he practised largely as a worm doctor. Gardner's tombstone may be seen close to the railings of the churchyard of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, inscribed : "1807, DR. JOHN GARDNER'S LAST AND BEST BEDROOM," etc. The date 1807 is explained by the fact that he erected it in that year in the churchyard. Finding that he was consequently assumed to be dead, and that his business declined, he interpolated the word "intended," which was removed after his actual death.

In Broad Street, as more frequently in his earlier practice in St. Mary Axe, Sir Astley Cooper had those dealings with the "body-snatchers" which belong to a darker medical age than ours. On the dissection of the dead human body all medical training and knowledge depended and still depends. Without the necessary supply of "subjects" the medical schools must have closed their doors, and Cooper, as a great medical teacher and investigator, became involved to a bewildering extent in the only method which existed of obtaining dead bodies. It is a grim chapter. But the finest physicians of the day felt justified in seeking, in what way they could, the one means by which the alleviation of human suffering and the training of students could be carried on. I refer those who



desire a fuller knowledge of this side of Sir Astley Cooper's career to two dreadful chapters in his biography, where the treatment of the subject is not more defensive than candid. Cooper's nephew is satisfied to write: "It is held as a common maxim that those who make use, in any way, of persons employed in illicit transactions, are as criminal as the delinquents themselves; but in this case the urgent necessity, for the sake of public good, of such apparent dereliction from duty, removes such a charge of guilt from the surgeons."

The evil at last reached dimensions which wrought its legislative cure. Sir Astley Cooper frankly told a Committee of the House of Commons that there was no person, let his situation in life be what it might, whose dead body he could not obtain if he wished. The Anatomy Act of 1832 put an end to the whole dreadful system. One observation should be made. It is that when the need for anatomical subjects brought forth the infamous body-snatcher, physicians themselves very frequently offered their own remains for dissection in the interests of the profession they had followed and loved. Indeed, several such instances can be connected with Broad Street. Sir Astley Cooper himself left strict injunctions that his body should be examined, and gave directions on the particular points which he considered would deserve attention. The eccentric Dr. Mounsey, the friend of Garrick and of many of the most eminent men of his time, arranged with Mr. John Cooper Forster, of Union Court, Broad Street, that his body should be dissected, and Forster actually dissected and lectured on it at Guy's Hospital.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Another Broad Street physician, Thomas Robson Ellerby, who died 29 January, 1827, a member of the Society of Friends, left

The City man hurrying down Broad Street to the Stock Exchange may think of the street as the home of learning, where divines and mathematicians and jurists and doctors of medicine have taught and toiled, and where astronomers have explored the mountains in the moon as earnestly as he who poised his glass

At evening from the top of Fesole,  
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,  
Rivers or mountains on her spotty globe.

For the largest commercial building in Old Broad Street is Gresham House, the representative of the old mansion that was the home of Sir Thomas Gresham, which he bequeathed to the Corporation of London and the Mercers' Company, to be used as a college and as an institution for the delivery of lectures on seven sciences.

The characters of Broad Street's wise men are drawn in Ward's "Lives of the Gresham Professors." Here in the "Geometry Professors' Lodgings," in a shady corner of the Green Court of the College, Henry Briggs heard in the year 1615 of Napier's great discovery of logarithms. He resolved to visit the Laird of Murcheston in Scotland, and he did so in the following summer. Each knew of the other's genius, and Lilly tells that when they met they looked long at each other, while minutes passed, without speaking, in the silent comradeship of truth-seeking.

In Gresham College, as its professor of astronomy, Christopher Wren lectured when he was twenty-five.

explicit directions that his body should be "taken to Mr. Kiernan's or some other dissecting-room," and he added a strong expression of his opinion that such a sacrifice was incumbent on every member of his profession.

His opening oration was an attempt to explain scientifically the going backward by ten degrees of the shadow on the dial of King Ahaz.<sup>1</sup> In Wren's chambers were to be seen the men who a few years later founded the Royal Society.

Another story in Ward's noble folio concerns Dr. John Bull, whose anthems still have a place in our cathedral music. Bull fell ill and was allowed to appoint a substitute at the College and to travel abroad for a year. Anthony Wood tells the story with almost scriptural unction :—

“Dr. Bull took occasion to go incognito into France and Germany. At length, hearing of a famous musician belonging to a certain cathedral (at St. Omer's, as I have heard), he applied himself as a novice to him to learn something of his faculty and to see and admire his works. This musician, after some discourse had passed between them, conducted Bull to a vestry, or music school, joining to the cathedral, and shew'd to him a lesson or song of forty parts, and then made a vaunting challenge to any person in the world to add one more part to them ; supposing it to be so complete and full that it was impossible for any mortal man to correct or add to it.

“Bull thereupon desiring the use of ink and rul'd paper (such as we call musical paper) prayed the musician to lock him up in the said school for two or three hours ; which being done, not without great disdain by the musician, Bull in that time, or less, added forty more parts to the said lesson or song. The musician thereupon being called in, he viewed it, tried it, and retried it. At length he burst out into a great ecstasy and swore by the great God that *he that added those forty parts must either be the devil or Dr.*

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Kings xx. 8–11.

*Bull.* Whereupon Bull making himself known, the musician fell down and ador'd him."

Evil days fell at last on the institution that bred these men. In 1710 the Royal Society forsook Broad Street for Crane Court in Fleet Street. In 1768 the City Fathers judged that the site of Gresham College had become more valuable than its lectures, and, to the indignation of the learned world, the professors were bundled into rooms in the Royal Exchange and their decayed home pulled down. The halls of learning gave place to an Excise office. The precincts of Gresham College are therefore dust under the wheels. Its Green Court, square to exactness, with diagonal paths and spaced saplings ; its north and south piazzas ; its reading-hall and observatory and its decent lodgings for men of refinement and learning—all are reduced to a commercial name, a flight of steps, and an apple-woman.

In Austin Friars, a precinct full of memories, Dr. Richard Mead, the most scholarly and magnificent physician of his time, had a house early in the eighteenth century. There under the shadow of the old prior of the Augustine Friars, which had long been the principal Dutch church in London, he received his friends with large hospitality ; and there the outspoken Radcliffe, who had told William the Third that he would not have His Majesty's legs in exchange for his three kingdoms, sat and talked "shop." It may have been in Austin Friars that the dialogue took place which goes far to explain the existence of friendship where rivalry might have been expected. Mead was a young man of tact, and knew how to please the Court physician. Radcliffe, paying his first call on the younger City practitioner, demanded in his brusque way : "Do you read Hippocrates in Greek ?"



IN BROAD STREET, F.C.

... SOARING BLACK STONE BUILDINGS RISING TO A SKY CROSSED AND FRETIED BY WIRES  
(p. 80)





“Yes,” replied Mead timidly, not wishing to vaunt his scholarship to his notoriously unlearned senior.

“I never read him in my life,” snapped Radcliffe.

“You, sir, have no need—you are Hippocrates himself.”

Another interchange took place at a dinner-party at Carshalton, where Radcliffe (such were the manners of the day) deliberately tried to make his young rival drunk. He did not succeed. Guest after guest fell under the table until only the old doctor and the young rival sat in their chairs.

“Mead,” cried the veteran, “you are a rising man. You will succeed me.”

“That, sir, is impossible; you are Alexander the Great, and who can succeed Radcliffe?”

“By ——!” was the reply, “I’ll recommend you to my patients.”

And he did, with the result that, as Dr. Johnson said, “Dr. Mead lived more in the broad sunshine of life than almost any man.”

It was in Austin Friars that Mead received the summons which sealed his fame and prosperity. He was called to the death-bed of Queen Anne, and, having seen her die in an atmosphere charged with apprehension, intrigue, and duplicity, he returned, immensely lifted in fame and favour, to Austin Friars and to his daily gossip at Batson’s Coffee-house by the Royal Exchange. This coffee-house, by the way, was the club and rendezvous of the Broad Street and other City doctors, who, according to a writer in the “Connoisseur,” flocked together like birds of prey watching for carcasses at Batson’s. Mead went there to meet his apothecary friends and prescribe for the hospital cases which they described to him. If we are to believe another writer of the period, this was the settled

custom: physicians never visited the hospitals, but prescribed in this manner, at second-hand, for the trustful patients.

There have been other famous tenants of this quiet precinct at the elbow of the Stock Exchange. That learned, voluminous, opulent, and highly respectable antiquary, Richard Gough, was born in Austin Friars in 1735. No books are handsomer—or less read—than Gough's "Sepulchral Monuments" or his translation of Camden's "Britannia," which occupied him seven years at his fine house at Enfield. Literary men may digest with profit the story that during these years of toil Gough remained so accessible to his family that no member of it was aware of his undertaking. Horace Walpole unkindly, and, on the whole, unjustly, described Gough as "one of those industrious men who are only re-burying the dead." Certainly Gough was no "Futurist"; so straightly did his mind run in old grooves that when bewailing an ancient cross that had been removed he added that its site was occupied by "an unmeaning market-house."

Austin Friars had been a choice residential precinct for at least two centuries when, in 1888, the last of its fine old houses, No. 1, was ruthlessly destroyed.<sup>1</sup> By chance I am able to remember its fine old staircase and panelled walls. It had been built in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and all its tenants had

<sup>1</sup> This house is described by Mr. Philip Norman and drawn by Mr. Emslie, in the "Illustrated Topographical Record of London" (third series), issued by the London Topographical Society in 1900. Its first tenant was Herman Olmius, merchant, descended from an ancient Luxembourg family. His eldest son became a Governor of the Bank of England and his grandson an Irish peer. For many years after 1783 the well-known Huguenot family of Minet occupied the house, which was afterwards used as business premises by Messrs. Thomas, Son, & Lefevre.

been merchant princes. It had a large garden, with bakehouse, brewhouse, and stables ; even the old well and pump remained. I see the house now as a kind of dim "Blakesmoor" of the City.

The brothers James and Horace Smith, authors of the "Rejected Addresses," lived at No. 18 Austin Friars, and James resided there for many years before he took his house in Craven Street, Strand. In Austin Friars the "Rejected Addresses," published in 1812 on the opening of Drury Lane Theatre, were written. The success of the little volumes was enormous, and it touched the pride of John Murray (the Second), who had rejected the "Rejected," a mistake which he instantly repented when he had read the book and heard Byron call it "by far the best thing since the *Rolliad*." He said afterwards, "I could have had the 'Rejected Addresses' for £20, but let them go by as the kite of the moment." The kite has flown well ever since and has attained its centenary. However, Murray lived to hold the string. Miller, of Bow Street, who had published the brothers' farcical "*Highgate Tunnel*," took the first risk, and the Smiths reaped £1000 from the first three editions ; but Murray, determined to retrieve his error, was at last able to purchase the well-milked copyright for £131.

James Smith's heart was in the West End, where his talents, wit, and social gifts procured him an entry into the innermost circles of society and clubland. In his City office he is said to have looked as serious as the parchments surrounding him. Horace was a stock-broker in Shorter's Court, but he lived and slept in Austin Friars. Possessing the two great essentials of stock-broking, prudence and a host of friends, he steadily amassed a reasonable fortune. He appears to have been occasionally a victim of the numerous

Napoleonic scares, and his verses, "The Stock-jobber's Lament," are redolent of the period and of Stock Exchange emotions.

Napoleon, who with me has play'd the Devil,  
Has doubtless acted it with many more,  
In midnight massacres disposed to revel,  
Or poison soldiers upon Jaffa's shore.

All other crimes I could forgive thee, Boney,  
But this exceeds the blackest in degree;  
'Tis murderous sacrilege to take my money,  
For money is both life and soul to me.

Now, concerning the Stock Exchange and its history and hoaxes, its men and manners, its panics and pastimes, are not all these things written in the books? I pass to a single portrait. "*He was just such a man as the boys in the street would have thought a fine subject for 'a lark'—unless, indeed, they had been deterred by the lowering expression or sullen aspect of his countenance. He always looked sulky.*" This was the man whose figure still stands out as the greatest that has ever haunted the Royal Exchange and the Stock Exchange—Nathan Meyer Rothschild, as seen by an eye-witness when Napoleon's power hung like a thunder-cloud over the bourses of Europe. In the Royal Exchange this genius had his favourite pillar, against which he leaned, and from which he never stirred. In the Stock Exchange he was hardly less a statue, if we may trust a contemporary writer who compares the monarch of finance to "the pillar of salt into which the avaricious spouse of the patriarch was turned."

When Rothschild stood on the Stock Exchange he could inspire such a description as this :—

"Eyes are usually denominated the windows of the

soul ; but here you would conclude that the windows are false ones, or that there is no soul to look out at them. There comes not one pencil of light from the interior, neither is there one scintillation of that which comes from without reflected in any direction.

"The whole puts you in mind of 'a skin to let,' and you wonder why it stands upright without at least something within. By and by another figure comes up to it. It then steps two paces aside, and the most inquisitive glance that ever you saw, and a glance more inquisitive than you would ever have thought of, is drawn out of the erewhile fixed and leaden eye, as if one were drawing a sword from a scabbard.

"The visiting figure, which has the appearance of coming by accident, and not by design, stops but a second or two, in the course of which looks are exchanged which, though you cannot translate, you feel must be of the most important meaning. After these, the eyes are sheathed up again, and the figure resumes its stony posture. During the morning numbers of visitors come, all of whom meet with a similar reception, and vanish in a similar manner ; and last of all the figure itself vanishes, leaving you utterly at a loss as to what can be its nature and functions."

This is not the portrait of a particularly happy man, and Nathan Meyer Rothschild never professed that money lifted him above care. He had so much reason to fear assassination that once, in a fit of suspicious terror, he flung a ledger at two respectable strangers who had presented themselves at his office, and who were rummaging in their pockets, not for lethal weapons, but for their letters of introduction. "You must be a happy man," a guest said to Rothschild in his splendid suburban home. "Happy !—me



happy!" was the reply. "What! happy when, just as you are going to dine, you have a letter placed in your hands, saying, 'if you do not send me £500 I shall blow your brains out'? Happy!—me happy!" Such are the legends.

The church, which almost fills the cool square of Austin Friars, is the successor to the old priory of the begging friars, who dedicated their foundation to Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, in Africa. And here, in the heart of the City, in the very swirl of stock-broking, sleeps one of Shakespeare's finest characters, a victim of the Tower—even Edward Bohun, Duke of Buckingham, who hated Wolsey to his own undoing. The scene of his departure from Westminster to the Tower is touchingly drawn in "Henry the Eighth," and his farewell words have an enduring bitterness:—

This from a dying man receive as certain:  
Where you are liberal of your loves and counsels  
Be sure you be not loose; for those you make friends  
And give your heart to, when once they perceive  
The least rub in your fortunes, fall away  
Like water from ye, never found again  
But where they mean to sink ye.

The priory church was ultimately granted to the Dutch people in London, under the name of "Jesus Temple," and here they still worship, singing the hymns of their fatherland over the graves of their forefathers. In the library the Ten Commandments are seen as they were inscribed by Peter Paul Rubens. The church is a haven of silence in the pit of the City; to walk in its deeply shadowed nave, paved with memorial slabs, is to breathe the air of a place which for six centuries has been the home of faith and learning—nor least when the friars sang great men to rest in the Latin tongue.



From Austin Friars one strolls by devious new-built alleys into Drapers' Gardens. Not much more than twenty years ago the word "garden" was descriptive, but to-day it is a courtesy. Here, when the paths were longer and the trees bigger, the children of City merchants and bankers were given the air and freedom to play their games. Such a child—a spirited boy—was regularly brought here by his mother from a house in Birchin Lane, in the first decade of the last century. This was the future Lord Macaulay. "So strong was the power of association," says Trevelyan, "upon Macaulay's mind that in after years Drapers' Gardens was among his favourite haunts. Indeed, his habit of roaming for hours through and through the heart of the City (a habit that never left him as long as he could roam at all) was due in part to the recollections which caused him to regard that region as native ground."

The somewhat circular route which it is natural to take in a midday stroll may bring you from Drapers' Gardens to another purlieu with an ancient name, in which modern activities usurp the site of old families and histories. "Oh, Death, Death, Death!" was the cry, uttered "in a most inimitable tone," heard by Daniel Defoe from an upper casement in Tokenhouse Yard, in the height of the Great Plague. So, at least, he tells us, in his "Memoirs of the Plague," but it could hardly have been a personal experience. The horror of the incident is deepened by Defoe's statement that "there was nobody to be seen in the whole street, neither did any other window open, for people had no curiosity now in any case, nor could anybody help one another, so I went on to pass into Bell Alley."

Tokenhouse Yard was built by the Marquis of

Lansdowne's brilliant ancestor, Sir William Petty, the most versatile gentleman of his age. He mapped Ireland with a thoroughness of surveyorship never before achieved, acquired a great fortune, invented a double-bottomed ship, married a witty and beautiful woman, became an original member of the Royal Society, wrote admirable Latin verses, selected a dark cellar and an axe for a duel that he never had to fight, was appointed a Commissioner of the Navy, astonished the world by his analysis of the London "Bills of Mortality," and his treatise on taxes, and only failed to win favour at Court "because he outwitted all the projectors that came near him."

The name of Tokenhouse Yard is now inseparable from its Auction Mart. But the "Mart" of a myriad newspaper advertisements dates only from 1864, when it superseded the older auction-rooms in Bartholomew Lane, hard by. It is a place of suppressed romance. In the many small, stuffy auction-rooms, into which the building is divided, ambition is gratified, territorial pride is humbled, wealth becomes stable, unthrift is expiated, and still the hammer falls.

The classic figure of the City Auction is George Robins, who built up his reputation in the earlier rooms in Bartholomew Lane, opposite the Bank of England Rotunda.<sup>1</sup> Robins, who died in 1847, was one of the best-known and liked men of his time. He brought a glad eye and a sumptuous vocabulary to the rostrum. In describing a country-seat he communicated to his audience a kind of "Family Herald" intoxication, investing a sale with all the glamour of a "happy ending," flattering his auditors' dreams of leisure, wealth, and territorial dignity, and overcoming any easy detection of his arts by the

<sup>1</sup> And in the Great Piazza, Covent Garden.

volume of his placid eloquence. He knew every trick of his calling. Before opening the business he would scatter comfortable remarks with the air of a man who had invited his friends to a reception, and would not allow them to be shy. To those who lingered at the door, in winter, he would say, "Do, my good friends, come inside ; you'll be much warmer if you do." In summer : "My good friends, do come inside ; you'll find it cooler here."

Robins did not deal in emphasis and gesture ; his lever was persuasion, and his magic lay in his air of being a benefactor. He seemed to come with gifts and critical opportunities in his hands asking only to be trusted ; some one's dream was about to be realized ; some man's fortune would certainly be made in the next ten minutes. He was so seized with his rôle, and so happy in performing it, that he seemed only to wait until the scales fell from the eyes of his hearers and they saw an earthly paradise within grasp. While bidders hesitated he would sit down in an arm-chair, playfully wagging his legs like a godfather of unappeasable benevolence. Other arts came into play. James Grant describes these in his "Portraits of Public Characters." If the bidding began to flag he would heave a sigh, and "declare with the utmost conceivable gravity of countenance that in the whole course of his professional experience he never met with anything so discouraging. Here he did not imply a criticism of his audience ; on the contrary, he would sadly surmise that his remarks had lacked perspicacity, and that his professional ability must be on the decline."

"If this had not the effect of eliciting higher offers from those who were previously aspirants for the property, or calling new competitors into the field, he assumes an unusually serious aspect, says he cannot

wait longer, and that whoever bids must do it *that instant*, otherwise it would be too late ; and, so saying, he causes the hammer to descend slowly, repeating at the same time the words 'Going, going, going.' This third 'Going' is uttered in so peculiar a manner that the highest bidder in many cases fancies, in the excitement of the moment, that the word is to be 'gone,' and exultingly exclaims : 'The property is mine !' This is exactly what Mr. Robins wishes. He then remarks with infinite address : 'Ah, my friend ; I don't wonder at your anxiety to possess the property ; you are too good a judge not to know what an immense bargain it would be at your offer. No, no, my friend ; that would never do ; it is still in the market.'"

Not less famous than his eloquence were Robins's printed descriptions of the properties he sold. Flowers by request was his motto when he put pen to paper. It is said that his advertisements, high flown as they were, never led to a repudiation of a purchase. If that was so, one may dismiss as apocryphal the story of a client who, without seeing a certain property, bought it under the spell of Robins's tongue, only to find that the "navigable meandering stream" was a stagnant canal, and the "picturesque hanging wood" a gallows. Robins died at Brighton in 1847, leaving a fortune of £140,000.

In St. Bartholomew's Church, now displaced by the Sun Fire Office, was buried Dr. Johnson's friend, John Ellis. Johnson went so far as to say, "It is wonderful, sir, what is to be found in London ; the most literary conversation that I ever enjoyed was at the table of Jack Ellis, a money-scrivener behind the Exchange, with whom I at one period used to dine, generally once a week."

Boswell looked up Ellis in 1790, and found him pretty hale in his ninety-third year. A few months earlier he had walked to Rotherhithe, dined, and in the evening walked back to his house in Throgmorton Street. Ellis had known how to combine business duties with literary tasks, having written certain Hudibrastic translations, and a version of Ovid's epistles. The scene of his meetings with Johnson was probably the "Cock" in Threadneedle Street, behind the Exchange gate. I judge that much reading and a vast experience of City men and manners had ripened Ellis's philosophy a little over-much, for, while I am glad to quote I do not profit by his epigram :—

He's wrecked on Scylla who Charybdis shuns,  
Who flies disease to the physician runs ;  
Fools flying vice, on vice run opposite,  
And strife who shun, seek law to set them right.

Then, as now, life was difficult.

Ellis was the last member of the profession of scriveners, as originally organized. It is curious that two such learned and finished poets as Milton and Gray should have been sons of City scriveners. The City ought never to forget that the author of the "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" was born in a house on the site of No. 41 Cornhill. He was the only child out of twelve who survived infancy, and he would have shared the fate of the others if his mother had not desperately opened one of his veins with her scissors. His father, Philip Gray, the money-scrivener, extravagant and eccentric, had a full-length portrait of his boy painted by Jonathan Richardson, the elder, the most accomplished portrait-painter of the day ; and this portrait is now the treasure of the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge.



The Cornhill fire of 1748, which consumed nearly a hundred houses, destroyed Gray's birthplace. The house had become his property, and he rebuilt it. The misfortune brought the poet from Cambridge, and temporarily shook him out of his dreams and studies. He was then nearing the end of his seven years' elaboration of the "Elegy." The house was insured for £500, and, on the whole, Gray was able to be amused by the consolations, in the form of opera-tickets and suppers, offered him by his London friends. There is a kind of providence in the fact that the author of the most familiar and best-loved meditation on life and death in our language was born in the City of London. No words of poetry are more certainly lodged in the memory of the first man you meet in Cornhill than those in which Gray assembles and suffuses with twilight the feelings wherein we do not differ from one another. That call of the glimmering landscape and evening hearth, that love of the field which no estrangement can wither, that gulf between riches and peace which no flattery can bridge, and the sure convergence of all our paths into precincts beyond anxiety and success: these are the things which, though they were not new or rare, Gray made a haunting whisper and a common scrip.

If there is no English poem better known than Gray's "Elegy, the same distinction in prose must be allowed to "Robinson Crusoe." And Cornhill saw a great deal of Daniel Defoe. The son of the Fore Street butcher had been educated for the ministry, when he suddenly perceived that the pulpit was not his place. "It was my disaster," he said, "first to be set apart for, and then to be set apart from, that sacred employ." Not the Reverend Daniel Defoe, but "Defoe the Civet Cat Merchant," broke upon the world. In



Freeman's Court, where long afterwards the firm of Dodson and Fogg was to play with Mr. Pickwick as a cat with a mouse, Defoe set up as newly married man and as a hosier. In the latter character he exported stockings to Portugal, of all places. By a plentiful lack of attention to business, and a strict non-observance of the shopkeeping maxims which he afterwards formulated in his "Compleat Tradesman," he fell into difficulties, and in 1692 he was figuring in Bristol as "the Sunday gentleman" who was kept indoors on every other day of the week by fear of pursuing bailiffs. But in the end he was able to walk in Cornhill when he pleased.

Nearly a century after Defoe failed in business in Freeman's Court the banking-house of Welch, Rogers, Olding, Rogers and Rogers stood here at No. 3; and into this bank entered Samuel Rogers, the banker-poet, "with no willing heart, but with a dogged determination to master his business in the City, and to write poetry at Stoke Newington." Relieved at last from business cares, but drawing a magnificent income from the bank, Rogers was able to give himself to society, literature, brilliant friendships, and the cultivation of that mordant wit of which we have so many records.

In 1811 the firm removed to Clement's Lane, Lombard Street, close by; and it was here that a strange calamity befell. The poet Gray's peace had been disturbed by a great fire, the banker-poet's was ruffled by a great robbery. On Sunday, 24 November, 1844, thieves broke into the bank, of which Rogers was now the head, and made an enormous haul of bank-notes. They abstracted from the safe no fewer than 36,000 one-pound notes, £1,200 in gold, and securities which brought the total theft to about

£50,000. The City was aghast, the West End agog, and it occurred to Rogers that it might amuse him in his declining years to see how little he could live on if the worst came to the worst. But the fates were kind; the thieves were unable to use the stolen paper, and the Bank of England repaid to Rogers & Co. the sum of £40,710, on a guarantee of indemnity. A bright side to the affair was revealed in the instant and practical sympathy which Rogers received from his friends. Lord Lansdowne immediately offered to transfer to Rogers's bank a balance of some thousands of pounds.

Freeman's Court cannot be found to-day. It was on the north side of Cornhill, close to the Exchange, and the entrance to it must have been a few yards east of the spot on which stands the statue of Rowland Hill. Dickens describes Dodson and Fogg's clerks as "catching about as favourable glimpses of Heaven's light and Heaven's sun, in the course of their daily labours, as a man might hope to do were he placed at the bottom of a reasonably deep well."

It was after Mr. Pickwick's departure, or rather after his forcible removal by Sam Weller to the air and sunlight of Cornhill, that Mr. Pickwick benignantly admitted that he had been "rather ruffled," and inquired where a glass of brandy and water warm might be had in the City. And it is at this point that Dickens records in a single world-famous sentence that *Mr. Weller's knowledge of London was extensive and peculiar.*

Dickens and Thackeray seem never to be far from each other, and it was at No. 65 Cornhill, opposite the Church of St. Peter, whose front is now masked by a silversmith's shop, that Thackeray had cordial and profitable dealings with the firm of Smith, Elder. It was here that the "Cornhill Magazine" was founded

and christened in January, 1860. "Our Store-house being in Cornhill," he wrote, "we date and name our Magazine from its place of publication." He had himself suggested the title, remarking, "It has a sound of jollity and abundance about it." Thus was opened a conduit for the thoughts and creations of many of the greatest Victorian writers.

To Cornhill belongs, by association, one of the most moving and monitory tales in the annals of forgery. In it William Wynne, engraver to George III, joined a Mr. Bryer in starting a print-shop. Although their trade was large, the enterprise ended in bankruptcy, and this misfortune was the first link in a chain of events that brought a man of rare accomplishment and graceful character to the gallows. On April 1, 1783, Ryland presented himself at Brensom & Co.'s bank and uttered a forged bill for an amount which is variously stated. Some accounts place it at several thousand pounds. His self-command at this moment, and at all other times, seems to have been extraordinary. Henry Angelo relates that the cashier examined the bill carefully, and referred to the ledger; then, observing the date, said, "Here is a mistake, sir; the bond, as entered, does not become due till to-morrow." Ryland coolly asked to be shown the book, and made answer: "So I perceive—there must be an error in your entry of one day," and, without a tremor, he offered to leave the bond. Disarmed by his manner, the cashier imagined that there was really an error in the ledger, and paid over the amount with apologies, and Ryland left with the money. Next day the true bill was presented, and all was discovered. In every London newspaper appeared a notice offering a reward of £500 for the apprehension of William Wynne Ryland, and the

walls displayed placards which augmented the hue and cry.

The hunted man first found a hiding-place in the Minories, where his restless nature—perhaps the strange claustrophobia of guilt—nearly led to his capture. "Though cautioned by his friends," says Angelo, "to remain in his hiding-place, yet, after a few days' confinement, he could not resist his desire to take a walk, after dusk, though he knew of the placards and the reward offered. Thus determined, he put on a seaman's dreadnought, and otherwise disguised set off and wandered about for a considerable time, when, returning across Little Tower Hill, a man eyed him attentively, passed and repassed him, and, turning short round, exclaimed, 'So, you are the very man I am seeking!' Ryland, betraying not the least emotion, stopped short, faced him, and returned, 'Perhaps you are mistaken in your man—I do not know you!' The stranger immediately apologized, owned his mistake, wished the refugee good-night, and then they departed." Alarmed by this incident, Ryland buried himself in Stepney. It was in Stepney that he was caught, and then, pitifully enough, his fate was sealed by an unconscious imprudence on the part of his wife, who was his companion in concealment. She took one of her husband's shoes to a cobbler to be mended. The name "Ryland" was inside it, and the cobbler to get the reward gave tidings to the officers on his track. When they arrived it was to find the unhappy man attempting suicide with a razor.

On July 20 the engraver stood at the bar of the Old Bailey. Even there it seemed that he had a chance of escape; the forgery was so wonderful that it was difficult to distinguish the real bill from the

false. Thirty and more signatures covering the true bill had been copied by the artist with an exactness which defied detection. Yet Ryland was lost when Mr. Whatman, a Maidstone paper-maker, stepped into the witness-box. Mr. Whatman said that the paper of the forged bill was of his manufacture. It turned out that the bill bore a date earlier than that on which the paper was proved to have been made. On this conclusive evidence Ryland was found guilty, and sentenced to death.

Ryland begged for a respite in order that he might complete in his cell a very fine plate on which he was engaged, and which he desired to leave to his wife as a contribution to the support of herself and his children. This remarkable request was granted, and day by day, in Newgate, Angelica Kauffman's picture of Queen Eleanor sucking the poison from the arm of her husband was reproduced. At last the plate was finished, and a proof was passed by Ryland. He said that he was now ready to die. Meanwhile the King had been approached with a view to saving his life, but George the Third could not be influenced by any statement of Ryland's valuable abilities. He replied—with some reason, it must be admitted—that "a man with such ample means of providing for his wants could not reasonably plead necessity as an excuse for his crime." One last indulgence the engraver's position did obtain for him : a coach to Tyburn. A thunderstorm delayed the execution, which was the last but one ever carried out at that place.

Cornhill ends at Gracechurch Street, whence Leadenhall Street continues the eastward artery. Here banking and insurance give place to shipping and merchandise, and the region adumbrates the stupen-



dous ingoings and outgoings of the Port of London. On the left of the street is the church of St. Mary Undershaft; and in it is the tomb of the father of all them who write about London. For there John Stow sits, London's "grandsire cut (literally) in alabaster," plying a quill with which he seems to be transcribing the city's story as it unfolds from age to age. We know him first as a tailor in Cornhill, then as a poor perambulating student of London, who was seen in every church and churchyard and muniment-room. His passion for London's history consumed his substance and his health. Ben Jonson, walking with him once in the City, was amused by hearing him ask two beggars "what they would have to take him into their order." Had Jonson given us one such anecdote about Shakespeare we should have been grateful; but the poet of Bankside eludes us, while the antiquary of Cornhill, who must surely have seen Shakespeare often, is a man whose hand we can shake. He is described as being tall and lean, with eyes "small and chrystaline," a face pleasant and open, and in his disposition "very mild and courteous to any that required his instructions." In old age his feet became painful, and he remarked, says Strype, how "his affliction lay in that part that formerly he had made so much use of in walking many a mile to search after antiquities." He was no romancer, he liked to shatter a myth. He showed that the "dagger" in the City arms was the cross and sword of St. Paul, and not, as tradition had it, the weapon with which Walworth stabbed Wat Tyler in the neck. But the City whose annals Stow gathered and corrected, and whose majesty he displayed, felt little gratitude to the old tramping tailor. There is not, I suppose, a literary document more charged with



unconscious irony than the one which records the endowment of research in the case of John Stow. It takes the form of a licence to beg.

Two landmarks of Cornhill cannot be passed over. The first is the Pump at the corner of the Royal Exchange. As late as 1875 a City man wrote: "I remember the time when the Cornhill Pump was besieged by quite a little crowd of persons with cans, bottles, etc., to get some pure spring water." The Pump is now merely a monument; it does not even feed its own trough, which is supplied with water from the mains. The inscriptions on the iron case will bear study. One of them reads:—

"On this spot a well was made, and a House of Correction built thereon by Henry Wallis, Mayor of London, in the year 1282."

Another:—

"The well was discovered, and enlarged, and this Pump erected in the year 1799, by the contributions of the Bank of England, the East India Company, the neighbouring Fire Offices, together with the Bankers and Traders of the Ward of Cornhill."

The most constant companion of the Cornhill Pump in the last hundred years has been the "little Green Shop" on the opposite side of the street—Birch's—now Ring & Brymer's, but always "Birch's." Its delicacies have been the manna of the City these two hundred years. Lucas Birch was in business in this shop early in the eighteenth century, and his son, Samuel Birch, born in 1757, succeeded to the business. Like Sir William Gilbert's gentle pieman, who varied his operations with roller and paste by writing "those lovely cracker mottoes," Mr. "Patty-Pan" Birch was no mean author and orator. He cultivated his mind in the debates held at the King's Arms Tavern,

in Cornhill, became a force in politics, and rose to be Lord Mayor in the year of Waterloo. His activities were so various that in a skit of the day a bewildered French visitor was represented as having seen him at the head of a militia regiment, read his poems, seen his plays at Drury Lane, until—in Theodore Hook's verses—

Guildhall at length in sight appears,  
An orator is hailed with cheers ;  
"Zat orator—vat is hees name?"  
"Birch, the pastry-cook—the very same."

No part of the City is more characteristic, or less known to the average Londoner, than the quarter of commercial lanes known as Rood, Philpot, Mincing, and Mark. The greatest of these is Mincing. All connect Eastcheap with Fenchurch Street. They are connected with each other by long dark corridors running through deep blocks of offices and sample-rooms. These corridors are freely used as short cuts, and a Mincing Lane youth sufficiently expert in the local topography finds his way from Mark Lane to Liverpool Street almost without leaving cover. The City is a honeycomb, and these curious journeys can be performed.

The gentlemen who stand near the Mincing Lane Sale Rooms seem to make a thousand a year by strolling about in a particular way. One sees, of course, that the way is everything. The Mincing Lane man carries in one hand a bright square tin, containing a sample of tea. Where he is taking it, what he proposes to do with it, is not known. He has never been seen to open this tin, but he carries it up and down the Lane in a manner so obviously correct, prescribed, and Laney, that you do not grudge him his house at Sutton. He holds it from the top, at the full length of

his left arm, which would slope back easily towards his coat-tails, if he wore coat-tails, but he wears a neat black jacket, and finds this garment compatible with a silk hat, tilted well back on his head. His walk is inimitable (even he cannot reproduce it elsewhere), but a description of its slow lilt would lead me too far into post-impressionism. It is believed to account for the rapt expression on the faces of the local apple-women.

The old East London House, now replaced by a pile of offices, gave great distinction to Leadenhall Street, though Ned Ward speaks of it saucily as "belonging to the East India Company, which are a corporation of men with long heads and deep purposes." Much of the interior was open to public inspection, and was fitted with Hindu images, trophies, Indian standards and weapons, state howdahs, Chinese and Indian paintings, and portraits of the early makers of British India. Here, in the Accountant-General's office, Charles Lamb sat at his desk for thirty-three years.

In this stately and exclusive establishment the destinies of India and the careers of many Englishmen were shaped during 250 years. Yet the East India House could be taken by storm. Joseph Brasbridge, the Fleet Street silversmith, whose writings I have quoted elsewhere, relates how a Mr. Jones, a clergyman, with a son to put out in the world, came with him to London and, as it happened, put up at the "Black Bull" in Leadenhall Street. Seeing a throng of carriages, he asked its meaning, and was told that a meeting of the East India directors was sitting. Whereupon he returned to his inn, and wrote this letter :—

"GENTLEMEN,—I have a parcel of fine boys, but not much cash to provide for them. I had intended my

eldest son for the Church, but I find he is more likely to kick a church down than to support it. I sent him to the University, but he could not submit himself to the college rules ; and, on being reproved by his tutors, he took it up in the light of an affair of honour, and threatened to call them to account for it. All my plans for his welfare being thus disconcerted, I asked him if he had formed any for himself ; he replied he meant to go to India. I then inquired if he had any interest, at which question he looked somewhat foolish, and replied in the negative. Now, Gentlemen, I know no more of you than you do of me. I therefore may appear to you not much wiser than my son. I can only say that he is of Welsh extraction for many generations, and, as my first-born, I flatter myself has not degenerated. He is six feet high, of an athletic make, and bold and intrepid as a lion. If you like to see him I will equip him as a gentleman, and—I am, Gentlemen, etc.”

This letter so impressed the board that the young man was sent for, and appointed a cadet. It will be expected by the reader that I am now about to disclose a name deeply graven in the annals of India. But no—the young giant threw up empire-making, and returned to a village pulpit.

Leadenhall Street brings one to the Beersheba of most Londoners—Aldgate Pump. Hereby, in the Minories, I once had an interesting experience. When its little church of Holy Trinity was closed, much was written about its remarkable relic, a human head. The caretaker, a foreman in a neighbouring factory, good-naturedly took me to the church, and I remember the strange transition from the noisy granite streets of that warehouse and workroom region, with its thundering drays and threatening cranes, into the quiet little build-

ing, with its amazingly high pulpit and oaken pews—in one of which Sir Isaac Newton is believed to have worshipped.

The caretaker soon went to a cupboard and brought me forth the head. It was in a specially constructed glass box—this head of the father of Lady Jane Grey. His? Well, that is the story, and it has the support of competent students. Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk, was beheaded on Tower Hill (close to the Minories), on 23 February, 1554, eleven days after the execution of his illustrious daughter. There is the inevitable tradition that the executioner was bribed to bring the head secretly to Holy Trinity Church and place it in the vault, where it was found about fifty years ago. Lord De Ros, a careful inquirer, accepted the story, and the late Mr. George Scharf, the curator of our national portraits, declared that the features agree with the best-known portrait of Henry Grey. Others think this resemblance is fanciful. As to the presence of the head in the church, it is enough to remember that heads were frequently recovered from the scaffold. Sir Thomas More's was secured by Margaret Roper, and Sir Walter Raleigh's by Lady Raleigh. Suffolk's head may have been recovered, too, and conveyed to the Minories, where the Earl's brothers resided. And it is known that Lady Grey took an interest in the church long after her husband's death. The remarkable state of preservation in which the relic remains is explained by supposing that the head was left undisturbed in the box of oak sawdust into which it would fall on the scaffold. The interesting theory that this is the head of the father of Lady Jane Grey was discussed at length in the "Times" in 1879, and in "Notes and Queries" in 1885. The then vicar of Holy Trinity stated that he had searched the registers



from beginning to end, but could find no mention of the burial of a beheaded person in the church. But as the existing registers begin in 1566, and Suffolk was executed in 1554, this does not weaken the traditional story.

We are at Aldgate Pump, and before it fades the immense London of "those that encamp toward the east." Many Londoners have seen, once in a way, the London Hospital and the People's Palace, both of which institutions stand on the great four-mile highway which connects Aldgate with Stratford, and distributes the human tide into the jerry-built fastnesses and creeping fogs of Essex. But these do not know East London. They have not strolled among the beetling warehouses and leafy churchyards of Wapping and Shadwell, or lounged on the river terrace by Blackwall Station, or lost themselves among the walls and draw-bridges of the docks, where the masts fill the sky like a redwood forest.

Sir Walter Besant was right when he said that to observe the true life of an East London neighbourhood you must adopt Richard Jefferies' maxim for seeing the life of wild nature—you must stand still and stand long. If you will retire into a doorway in a nameless by-way of Bethnal Green, and stand one whole hour watching those who come and go, you will—unnoticed yourself—see into the heart of things. To know in some true way this vast region, which is equal in size to St. Petersburg or Philadelphia, is to wonder at its order, its household dignities, its social keeping, its magnetic cheerfulness, its immense honest energy that makes the best of destiny.

Of all East London neighbourhoods none is more interesting than Spitalfields, which lies north of the Whitechapel Road. It may best be entered by Brush-





### BEYOND ALDGATE PUMP

BEYOND IT FADES THE IMMENSE LONDON OF "THOSE THAT ENCOMP' TOWARDS  
THE EAST" (P. 112)



field Street, in Norton Folgate. Here you see an intelligible goal in the huge grey mass of Christ Church, Spitalfields. Nicholas Hawksmoor reared its tower one hundred and sixty years ago, and imprisoned the shadows of the eighteenth century in its enormous portico. Everywhere you perceive that new wine has been poured into old bottles. In Crispin Street, in Spital Square, in Elder Street, in Fournier Street, in Wilkes Street, you may fancy that a dying glory smiles on the stately Georgian houses, with red walls, flat windows, and carved lintels. Fine must have been the lustrings and paduasoyes, heavy the brocades, that brought Spitalfields its wealth and cheerfulness when the bells of Christ Church showered down the notes of "Home, Sweet Home" and "The Lass of Richmond Hill" on the red roofs of the suburb. Through all the Georgian era the twelve bells made music in the sky. Then, one midnight, the lightning struck the belfry, and the bells were heard crashing to the ground amid claps of thunder. Many a weaver must have taken their fall for an omen, and the omen has fulfilled itself. Not only the chimes have gone ; the clack of the loom is now little heard in Spitalfields. No more does the weaver's song, loved by Falstaff, float down from the queer old latticed windows that show you in what rooms the warp and weft danced themselves into beauty.

Two kinds of houses in Spitalfields recall the weaving days. First there are these tall old houses dating from Queen Anne and the Georges, in which the master weavers lived, or in which at a later period they only gave out work. I can see Daniel Defoe wandering among them when they were new, with his keen eye for prosperity. Secondly, there is the humbler home of the working weaver, usually small,

but sometimes rising to three stories. It shows a rich albeit much-blackened brick, and its unfailing feature is its upper large window, or range of windows, filled with small panes of glass. You cannot pass such a house without a sense of desolation. It is true that other workers have poured into them (I have seen a cobbler's bald head and flying hammer where I hoped for a weaver's paraphernalia), but the light of poetry has faded from the square panes under the eaves. Many weaver's houses are a hundred years old, some are a hundred and fifty. On one in Brick Lane I remarked the date 1723. It is not surprising that time bears these workshops away but slowly, when it is remembered that eighty years ago there were 20,000 looms in Spitalfields, employing 50,000 people, and that up to 1860 the Spitalfields weavers were still a great though declining community.

Spitalfields is but one of many East End regions in which it is good to have wandered. You catch suggestions of the old maritime order in Wapping and Shadwell and Limehouse. Wapping Old Stairs, of immortal memory, may still be found, though its boat-bustle is no more. In Poplar's High Street are private schools of navigation, and in all that region there is tar and ropes and the mention of distant ports. The sky at the end of a slum is crossed by the gleaming spars and cordage of a sailing ship, or from a great bowsprit a carven goddess stares down upon the stones, as if looking for the swoon of green water.

Far away—beyond Shadwell, Limehouse, and Poplar—is a London which is fain to call itself "London-over-the-Border," where Canning Town and Silvertown, and Tidal Basin and Gallions fade along the flats to North Woolwich.

The Isle of Dogs, Plaistow, Manor Park, growing Ilford ; and West Ham, that monster crouching in the mist !

London becoming Essex, and Essex becoming London, where the great ships ride high between the farms !

World of London without end ! And, since without appreciable end, without the charm of outskirts—let us confess it. London has an immense irregular selvage, still delightful in patches, but fraying away until it ceases to be organic, or suggestive of the town. True outskirts are visibly related to the body that wears them ; they afford views of the centre, and offer an accessibly brighter sunshine and a cleaner rain. When Londoners stand long before the Dutch pictures in the National Gallery, I think that they are fascinated by the Dutchmen's towns seen across dunes or drying-grounds. Ruysdael's "Haarlem" is such a picture. This is the charm, too—no small part of it—of Rembrandt's etching, the "Three Trees," where the rainstorm, still in the outskirts, is moving grandly to the town, and it is the whole charm of his little "Amsterdam" in which we see the city from the marshes of the Amstel, or the Ij, fretting the sky with mast and boat-shed, windmill and tower. In effect we have abolished London's outskirts, for when we reach them we have ceased to look back. Compensation we have : poets and painters alike have become aware of the beauty of the inner streets and the imprisoned fogs. To these, then, let us return.

## CHAPTER V

### THE HOUSE-MOVING OF THE GODS

The Euston Statuary Yards—Plastic Piccadilly—"Our Old Friend, the Pelican"—Joseph Wilton—A Window in Charlotte Street—Edward Fitzgerald—John Constable—Cockney Ladle—Willan's Farm—The Coming of the Omnibus—The "Green Man"—The Spread of London—The Parent of the Motor-car—The Inspector of Fishes—The Birth of Camden Town—Boy Boz—Warren Street—Cookery and Culture—"The Village Politicians"—"The March to Finchley"—A Nursery of Pugilists—The Tottenham Court Road—Bozier's Court—Hanway Street—A Great Corner—"I too am sometimes unhappy"

A GREY nimbus of sentiment hovers over that fag-end of the Euston Road where the statuary yards are always a-cold, and a warm air creeps for ever out of Portland Road Station. The note of the neighbourhood is in the statuary yards, with their queer mixture of objects which represent the dead man and the undying myth. Here is the eagle for the garden-gate, and the dove for the tomb. Here Venus rises from composition foam, and Mercury—Boy Messenger of the gods—implores release from modern epitaphs. Cold and grotesque as they are, these stone-yards detain the eye by their display of forms and ideals that have descended from nature to Greece, and from the Athenian chisel to the Euston mould. Not all is lost that Myron carved or Phidias breathed: the



impoverished spirit has informed the debased process, and Hebe is a Hebe of sorts. There is yet a residuum, "a shadow of a magnitude." I suspect that Colonel Newcome turned a more intelligent eye on these images in the New Road than ever he did on Clive's drawings or the masterpieces of Gandish. He must have seen them on his way from his gaunt house in Fitzroy Square for his morning walk in Regent's Park, and it may be that he looked on them with a sadder gaze than usual on the morning when the "Post" contained the advertisement of the sale of his three horses, "the property of an officer returning to India."

All this plastic world came from Piccadilly more than a hundred years ago. There, the mansions facing the Green Park are built on the sites of the statuary yards and shops which supplied the Walpolian age with garden gods and nymphs. Probably the oldest of these sculpture yards was Van Nost's, the site of which is now occupied by No. 105 Piccadilly. His business was purchased by Sir Henry Cheere, who, though he had enough talent to obtain commissions in Westminster Abbey, nevertheless turned out a great deal of cheap-jack work from his "despicable manufactory," as John Thomas Smith calls it, in Piccadilly.

Smith relates that Joseph Nollekens took him one day, when he was a boy, to visit his friend, Mrs. Haycock, an aged lady who lived near Hampstead Heath. "Her evergreens were cut into the shapes of various birds; and Cheere's leaden painted figures of a shepherd and shepherdess were objects of as much admiration with her neighbours as they were with my Lord Ogleby, who thus accosts his friend in the second scene of the 'Clandestine Marriage':

'Great improvements, indeed, Mr. Stirling! wonderful improvements! The four seasons in lead, the flying Mercury, and the basin with Neptune in the middle are in the very extreme of fine taste. You have as many such figures as the man at Hyde Park Corner.'"

Francis Bird, the sculptor of the original Queen Anne group in front of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Abbey monument of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, which Pope called "the bathos of sculpture," was born in Piccadilly. In Carter's statuery yard at 101 Piccadilly, Roubiliac found his first employment in London. Here also worked John Deare, who met his death in Rome by his rash experiment of sleeping on a block of marble in the hope that he would dream of a masterpiece. Scheemakers, the sculptor of the Shakespeare statue in Westminster Abbey, had his studios in Vine Street, Piccadilly, where Nollekens, his apprentice, made rapid progress in spite of his passion for helping the sexton to toll the death-bell at St. James's Church.

When Piccadilly began to attract wealthy residents, the statuery folk moved northward to the Oxford Street and Fitzroy regions. Thus Rysbrack had workshops in Vere Street, where he carved Sir Isaac Newton's monument for the Abbey. Agostino Carlini settled at 14 Carlisle Street, Soho. He executed three of the nine symbolic heads of British rivers on the Strand front of Somerset House, those of Tyne, Severn, and Dec. His assistant was Giuseppe Ceracchi, who left him to establish himself north of Oxford Street at No. 76 Margaret Street, where he instructed that clever amateur, the Honourable Mrs. Damer. This unfortunate sculptor joined the Paris revolutionists, and was guillotined in 1801, but at least he contrived to be drawn to his execution in

a car designed by himself, and in the habit of a Roman Emperor.

That successful and religiously minded artist, John Bacon, R.A., settled at 17, Newman Street, where he moulded his gladiatorial statue of Dr. Johnson for St. Paul's Cathedral, the Chatham monuments in the Guildhall and the Abbey, and the recumbent figure of Father Thames in the quadrangle of Somerset House. Bacon's courtly side appeared in his reply to Queen Charlotte, who, looking at the Thames group, asked him, "Why did you make so frightful a figure?" "Art," he replied, "cannot always effect what is ever within the reach of Nature—the union of beauty and majesty." Bacon's thoroughly British outlook made him popular, his business-like habits brought him wealth. A story illustrates his methods. An order for a monument had been left with his foreman in Newman Street during his absence.

"Well," he said on his return, "is it to be in memory of a private gentleman?—and what price was proposed?"

"Three hundred pounds, sir."

"Three hundred pounds—a small bas-relief will do. Was he a benevolent man? You asked that, I hope."

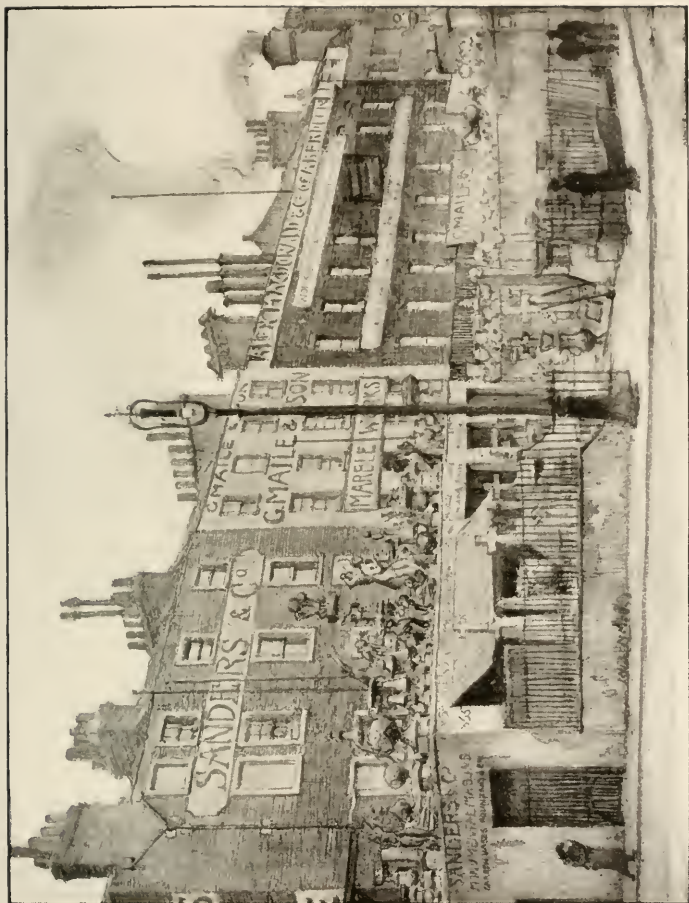
"Yes, sir—he was a benevolent man. He always gave sixpence, they said, to the old woman who opened his pew-door on Sundays."

"That will do—that will do; we must have recourse to our old friend, the Pelican."

The art associations and rural features of the district between Oxford Street and the Euston Road are to be found in the pages of John Thomas Smith's *harum-scarum* biography, "Nollekens and his Times," and in his anecdotal miscellany, "A Book for a Rainy Day." As a boy Smith began to help his father, who

was Nollekens' assistant, and he was drawing in the Mortimer Street studio when Dr. Johnson sat for his bust. The doctor looked at the boy's work and, patting him on the head, said, "Very well, very well." The boy went to the surrounding studios with his master or his father. In Foley Place, old Joseph Wilton, R.A., had his yard and workshops, and here was a model of the coronation coach which he had helped to build for George III, and, indeed, for his present Majesty. Wilton had done the carving, Cipriani the paintings, and the general design was made by Sir William Chambers, who married Wilton's daughter. Smith recalls a pretty cottage near the Middlesex Hospital, where one of Wilton's labourers lived, and near it a rope-walk and two rows of magnificent elms, under which he often saw Richardson Wilson, the painter, walk with Joseph Baretti.

Wilson lived at No. 36 (now 76) Charlotte Street, where he liked to throw open his window to enjoy the sunset behind the Hampstead and Highgate uplands. London has since interposed many mean streets between his house and those Delectable Mountains, yet looking up Charlotte Street on a clear day you will see the thin spire of Highgate Church piercing the brightness of the north horizon. I love the memory of this brusque, bottle-nosed master who slouched around his lodgings in the Covent Garden Piazza, drank and talked at Old Slaughter's, and pawned his pictures in Long Acre, while to his inner eye the Italian sun bathed rock and temple in the light of a younger world. It was from Covent Garden, where he had a model made of a portion of the Piazza (the entire work of the piers being provided with drawers, and the openings of the arches holding pencils and



EUSTON ROAD STATUARY

HERE IS THE EAGLE FOR THE GARDEN GATE, AND THE DOVE FOR THE TOMB. HERE VENUS RISES FROM COMPOSITION FOAM, AND MERCURY—BOY MESSENGER OF THE GODS—IMPLORES RELEASE FROM MODERN EPIITAPHS (P. 116)





oil-bottles), that Wilson moved to Charlotte Street, and thence, cruising in the same district, to Foley Place and Tottenham Street. His misfortune was to produce unsaleable pictures which prepared the way for Turner. But Peter Pindar, who chastised the painters of his day with scorpions, foresaw Wilson's value to posterity. Wilson was at least spared the bitterness of self-distrust. He once said to Sir William Beechy, "You will live to see great prices given for my pictures, when those of Barret will not fetch one farthing." His later London days were brightened when he received the post of librarian to the Royal Academy. Then he came unexpectedly into a small estate in Wales, left him by his brother. He journeyed down from London to Lanverris, in Denbighshire, to sit on the rocks in the sun, and to hold communion with the grey hills. But his powers were spent, and one day while walking with his dog he sank exhausted. The dog ran home and pulled the servants to the spot where his dying master lay. Few men had known more of London squalor or of Italian beauty. What pictures and titles were his: "The Death of Niobe," "The Villa of Mæcenas at Tivoli," "Celadon and Amelia," "View on the Coast of Baiæ," "The Tomb of the Horatii and Curatii," "The Broken Bridge of Nemi." What concord of names and hues of the evening!

In those days the northern end of Newman Street commanded a view of fields and hillocks, and Nollekens remembered that he had come with his mother to the top of this street to walk by a long pond near a windmill, and that the miller charged a halfpenny to people who entered his grounds. He could recall thirteen fine walnut-trees standing a little north of Hanway Street. One Sunday morning he and his

pupil saw the parish beadles seize the clothes of some boys who were bathing in another pond, known as Cockney Ladle, on the site of Duke Street, Portland Place. The water in the Marylebone Basin hard by was dangerously deep, and many drownings occurred in these ponds, whose sites are marked in old maps. The semi-rural state of these districts is curiously evident in a piece of news published in the "St. James's Chronicle" of 8 August, 1769: "Two young [sedan] chairmen were unfortunately drowned on Friday evening last in a pond behind the north side of Portman Square. They had been beating a carpet in the square, and, being thereby warm and dirty, agreed to bathe in the above pond, not being aware of its great depth."

But houses soon multiplied, and their coming is reflected in John Constable's discovery that Charlotte Street, where he settled in 1822, was becoming a place of distractions. To be "out of the way of the callers," and on account of his wife's poor health, he took another house at Hampstead, retaining a studio in Charlotte Street. And Edward Fitzgerald, who lodged sometimes in the street, wrote from it in 1844: "O Barton, man! but I am grilled here. O for to sit upon the banks of the dear old Deben, with the worthy collier sloop going forth into the wide world as the sun sinks." And Constable's own heart was in that East Anglia which is so little esteemed by the amateurs of scenery, though it inspired Gainsborough, Cotman, and Crome. He reverted always to his boyhood on the Stour. "The sound of water escaping from mill-dams, etc., willows, old rotten planks, slimy posts, and brickwork—I love such things." Charlotte Street has become populous and also un-English, but to-day Dedham Church rises with motherly grace in the Stour

valley, where willows and aspens quiver among the darker trees, as Constable painted them ; the river is deep and pure at Flatford Mill, and only the shadow on the dial seems to have moved in the little churchyard of East Bergholt.

Charlotte Street is now the long, straight artery of a northern Soho. Here waiters are waited on at their clubs. Here flourish German and Austrian and French restaurants, revolutionary clubs, *blanchisseries*, *charcuteries*, and *bureaux de placement*. The newspapers of half a dozen countries and their flamboyant fiction can be bought here. Walking these streets one can still feel the Marylebone fields underfoot. The old ponds do not seem to have been filled up, and curious depressions, dedicated now to mews and garages, can be found. Many of the early genteel houses are standing near Rathbone Place, and it is noticeable that in certain streets the better houses are on the south side with an air of having enjoyed the old view up to Highgate.

The cottages opposite the statutory yards in the Euston Road were known as Quickset Row. The Green Man Tavern by Portland Road then stood on the edge of the town, and its windows looked on the fields and stacks of two farms. Willan's farm was at the top of Portland Street. Mr. Willan came up from Yorkshire as a young man. He was a good judge of horses, and became a successful contractor for cavalry mounts and one of those opulent grass-farmers who supplied London with milk. Of him, as of Laycock at Islington, it was said that though he owned 999 cows he never could keep a thousand. To many a Londoner this farm had been a landmark in boyhood. White-thorn hedges led from it to Primrose Hill, and there was a famous stickleback pond. Hard

by was the "Jew's Harp" tea-garden, with boxes for snug parties, and about it a number of Cockney summer-houses with castellated roofs on which miniature cannon were permanently silent. A zigzag path, known as Love Lane, led to the "Queen's Head and Artichoke," a like resort.

Not far off, in the Marylebone Road, stood the "Yorkshire Stingo," whence, in 1829, the first parents of the London omnibus ran to the Bank at the bidding of George Shillibeer. The "Yorkshire Stingo" was not the birthplace of this great species of vehicle; Paris gave the omnibus to London. After a life of piety and austerity, after writing tracts which in Voltaire's judgment equalled Molière in their wit and Bossuet in their sublimity, and after committing to the judgment of Heaven the opinions for which Rome had condemned him, Blaise Pascal drooped into suffering, invented the omnibus, and died. Paris went mad over the conveyance, and then forgot it. In 1819 Lafitte, the banker, reintroduced the vehicle under the name of "omnibus."

Dictionaries coldly derive the word from the Latin without the pleasing legend that belongs to it. In an old French magazine may be found the story of a certain M. Baudry, who established in 1827 hot baths in a suburb of Nantes. Lacking customers, he sent, at fixed hours, a long car into the highways and hedges, or rather into the centre of the town, to induce them to come in. This was the first "omnibus." The name occurred to a friend of Baudry's, and it caught the public fancy the more readily because a grocer of Nantes named Omnes had painted over his door the words, "Omnes Omnibus" (Omnes for All). Taking a hint from his local success, Baudry started omnibuses in Paris, but the winter of 1829 made the

streets slippery and forage dear, and he is said to have died of grief. In that year the first London omnibus ran from the "Yorkshire Stingo." London did not take kindly to the word "omnibus." "What is the plural?" people asked; and when Joseph Hume spoke in the House of Commons of *omnibi* there was the laughter called "much." The vehicles were long known as "Shillibeers," and if their proprietor had not met with misfortune and taken to providing hearses, the name would probably have survived to this day. As it was, people felt an ambiguity. The first two "Shillibeers" ran to the City by the New Road, now the Marylebone, Euston, and Pentonville Roads. They were drawn by three horses abreast, and had conductors who had been with Shillibeer in Paris—likely young men. They wore a middy-like costume, and when it became known that they were sons of naval officers the young ladies of Paddington used to ride as far as King's Cross in order to improve their French.

The "Shillibeers" carried twenty-two passengers; the fare was a shilling. Newspapers and magazines were provided—not without reason, since the journey was slow, and there was a long half-way halt. In this generosity Shillibeer was outdone by a later owner, Mr. Cloud, who ran omnibuses between the Haymarket and Chelsea. Cloud placed a small well-chosen library in each of his omnibuses, so that he who rode might read the standard authors. People rode to Hammersmith purposely to read these books. As they also stole them, this method of getting culture was not so expensive as it looks. The first free library was an omnibus.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For many of these particulars I am indebted to Mr. Henry Charles Moore's useful and entertaining "Omnibuses and Cabs: Their Origin and History."



On the site of Osnaburgh Street stood Kendall's farm, where old people remembered seeing eight or ten big hayricks in a row. To the Green Man Tavern came Richard Wilson to play skittles. The "Green Man" was then known as the Farthing Pie-house, from the mutton-pies which were sold there when a farthing went farther than it does now. It was kept by one Price, an inspired performer on that mysterious musical instrument, the salt-box, which was beaten with a rolling-pin, apparently as a drum capable of producing something like notes. The great Abel, the 'cello player, and the friend of Gainsborough, was another of Price's crony customers.

The regrets which the spread of London awakened, about the time when Miser Elwes was running up his streets in St. John's Wood, are set forth in the chapter "Nothing to Eat" in Pyne's "Wine and Walnuts." Says Dr. Ducarel: "I remember those fields in their natural, rural garb, covered with herds of kine, when you might stretch across from old Willan's farm there, a-top of Portland Street, right away without impediment to St. John's Wood, where I have gathered blackberries as a boy." It is on record that Thomas Lowe, "Tommy Lowe" of Vauxhall, raised a subscription to enable a poor man to give children rides in this quiet neighbourhood in a small chariot drawn by four muzzled mastiffs.

Trinity Church parts Osnaburgh Street from Albany Street. Osnaburgh Street was named after the Duke of York—of the Column—in his character of Bishop of Osnaburg. It leads to Cumberland Market, which is the old Haymarket's haymarket mislaid, and one of the most outlandish places in London. Under snow it is the picture of a Siberian village in a forty-year-old wood-cut.



A large motor-car exchange has given a touch of the twentieth century to the lower end of Albany Street, which also has its name from the Duke of York (and Albany). The presence of this mechanical establishment produces a coincidence, for it was in Albany Street that Sir Goldworth Gurney constructed the first effective motor-car seen in this country in the shape of his famous "steam-carriage." Gurney was a flourishing doctor in Regent Street, and moved hither into premises where he could develop his idea. His daughter's interest in the progress of this machine may not have been shared by the neighbours.

"From a window of my room I looked into the yard where my father was constructing his steam-carriage. The intense combustion caused by the steam-blast, and the consequent increase of high-pressure steam force acting on the jet, created such a tremendous current or draught of air up the chimney that it was something terrific to see or to hear.

"The workmen would sometimes throw things into the fire as the carriage passed round the yard—large pieces of slate or sheet-iron—which would dart up the chimney like a shot, falling occasionally nearer to the men than was safe, and my father would have to check their enthusiasm. The roaring sound, too, sometimes was astounding. Many difficulties had to be overcome, which occupied years before 1827.

"The noise had to be got rid of, or it would have frightened horses, and the heat had to be insulated, or it might have burnt up the whole vehicle. The steam machinery was at first contrived to be in the passenger-carriage itself, as the turnpike tolls would have been double for two vehicles. My father was

forcibly reminded of this fact, for there was then a turnpike-gate immediately outside the manufactory. This gate was first on the south side of the doors, and the steam-carriage was often exercised in the Regent's Park barrack-yard ; then the gate was moved just a few yards to the north, between the doors and the barracks.

"But perhaps the greatest difficulty, next to that of prejudice, which was strong against all machinery in those days, was to control the immense power of the steam and to guide the carriage. It would go round the factory-yard more like a thing flying than running, and my father was often in imminent peril while making these experiments.

"He, however, at last brought the carriage completely under control, and it was perfected. One was built to carry the machinery, the driver, and stoker only, and to draw another carriage after it. My father could guide it, turn it, or back it easily ; he could set it going or stop it instantly, uphill or down ; he frequently went to Hampstead, Highgate, Edgware, Barnet, Stanmore, and its rate could be maintained at twenty miles an hour, though this speed could only be indulged in where the road was straight and wide, and the way clearly to be seen."

To No. 37 Albany Street Frank Buckland took his young wife (Miss Hannah Papes) in 1863, and here he lived until his death in 1880. This house had previously been occupied by Charles Dickens's father-in-law, Mr. Hogarth. Here Buckland set up the most amazing household in London. Animals, birds, and reptiles were to be seen everywhere ; monkeys were not too troublesome, a jaguar was not too wild, snakes and glow-worms were not too unpleasant, to be welcome in the house. Cats, rats,

mice, parrots, and guinea-pigs and laughing jackasses were there as a matter of course. A light in the kitchen window would signal the fact that Buckland was working all night to make a cast of a sturgeon borrowed from a Bond Street fishmonger. Parties of New Zealanders, Zulus, and Aztecs, arrived in London, took a bee-line to 37 Albany Street. The Siamese Twins and the Two-headed Nightingale were received there as friends of the family. It was a happy household, and Mrs. Buckland's part may be understood in the fact that her particular pet was the young jaguar. Death came untimely to this fine naturalist and Government Inspector of Fisheries. His biographer's account of Buckland's farewell to life, once read, cannot be forgotten. "God is so good," he said, "so very good to the little fishes, I do not believe He would let their inspector suffer shipwreck at last? I am going a long journey, where I think I shall see a great many curious animals. This journey I must go alone."

To look up Albany Street is to think of Camden Town, a great habitat of young Londoners. The name is a vague geographical expression, standing for a district which lies between and about the Cobden statue and the eponymous North London Railway Station. It was not easy to say exactly where the old yellow bus entered or left it.

The district came into being in 1791. The date is fixed by a letter of Horace Walpole's, in which he says, "Lord Camden has just let ground at Kentish Town for building fourteen hundred houses—nor do I wonder. London is, I am certain, much fuller than ever I saw it." Charles Jenner, the author of certain "Town Eclogues," appears to have seen these brickly beginnings and to have disliked them. He represents

himself as a poet sitting on a stile near the "Mother Red Cap" :—

Where'er around I cast my wandering eyes,  
Long burning rows of fetid bricks arise.

Probably these lines were written rather earlier than 1791, but they smack of the changing soil, and they recall the moment when the London we know was emerging from the eighteenth century.

Charles Pratt, Lord Camden, was Attorney-General and Lord Chancellor, and a brave and honourable man. He it was who gave Wilkes his Habeas Corpus. The people adored him as a friend of liberty. "Busts and prints of him were hawked through remote villages; a Reynolds portrait of him was hung up in the Guildhall. . . . English journals and travellers carried his fame over Europe." This was the man who founded Camden Town, and gave his name to Pratt Street, and who, as Viscount Bayham and as the husband of a Brecknock lady, is also represented in the names of Bayham Street and Brecknock Road.

A hundred years ago fields still spread where Dickens was to be baptized a Londoner in the gloom of Camden Town. Bayham Street was not built in 1806; it was ready for the Dickens family in 1823. As a fact, it was built in 1812. At the back of Bayham Street there was a hayfield, for Boy Boz to tumble in. When the Dickens family came to it the street was already small-suburban. A washerwoman lived next door, and a Bow Street officer made one house awful over the way. Yet the street was not so humble as now. The father of Frank Holl, the Royal Academician, lived in Bayham Street, and at least two well-known artists and a dramatic author.



CHARLOTTE STREET (WITH JOHN CONSTABLE'S HOUSE)

. . . NOW THE LONG STRAIGHT ARTERY OF A NORTHERN SOHO, WHERE WAITERS  
ARE WAITED ON AT THEIR CLUBS (P. 123)





The district was lit by oil-lamps, and Boy Boz often ran to the top of the street to see the watchman start from his box, which stood there, to light the lamps round the Mother Red Cap Tavern.

From the Mother Red Cap Tavern southwards the High Street rose at the end of the eighteenth century. At first it consisted of small shops with one floor above, and a few of these houses remain. The most conspicuous object in High Street is the statue of Cobden at its foot. Napoleon III was a large contributor to the cost of this monument, which was fashioned in one of the Euston Road sculpture yards. It was erected in 1868 on the site of a turnpike that had disappeared five years earlier, and Mrs. Cobden and her daughter stood on a neighbouring balcony to see the unveiling. It is a peculiarity in this statue that, seen from behind, it raises a vivid expectation that you are approaching an effigy of the late Lord Salisbury.

Returning now to the sepulchral end of the Euston Road: visible from it at various turnings, is a street which belongs to few men's London. Its length of tall but odd-sized Georgian houses is best known in the view of it from the Tottenham Court Road, looking westward. Warren Street, its name. The average Londoner knows this street only as a sub-conscious glimpse into a hinterland with which he has no concern. Small chandlers, bootmakers, greengrocers, plumbers, and so on are established in the ground-floors of many of the houses, and in the room that was once a parlour petrol-tanks are charged. Other houses keep their residential rôle. It is a dingy, populous street of no attraction, the sort of street in which Frank Buckland might have stopped to see on a fine day a dusty dancing-bear. Yet it has known brisk times and eager guests. In

the house which he knew as No. 43—it is now obliterated by a warehouse—Dr. William Kitchiner entertained his fellow-wits and gourmets. The last of his famous dinners was held eighty years ago.

Kitchiner had inherited £70,000 from his father, a Strand coal-merchant, and was therefore able to ride his three hobbies—optics, cookery, and music. To these he added a genial eccentricity. His dinners were often elaborate experiments in cookery, and the guests had to recognize this fact. Five minutes past five was the minute, and if a guest came late the janitor had irrevocable orders not to admit him, for it was held by the mythical “Committee of Taste,” of which Kitchiner was “Secretary,” that the perfection of some of the dishes was often so evanescent that “the delay of one minute after their arrival at the meridian of concoction will render them no longer worthy of men of taste.”

In becoming an epicure Kitchiner did not cease to be a physician with a care for the human machine. His dinners, though *recherché*, were usually limited to three dishes. Sauces were his peculiar care. Alaric Watts, the poet and editor, recalled an evening when the doctor produced from a drawer in his side-board a sauce of superpiquant quality, upon the merits of which he was still expatiating when a guest, taking up the bottle, poured at least a teaspoonful on his plate. “God bless my soul!” exclaimed Kitchiner, “my dear friend, do you know what you have done? You’ve spoilt your steak and wasted a guinea’s-worth of my sauce. One drop, sir! One drop on the gravy was all that was needful!” When Kitchiner’s guests adjourned to the drawing-room they found curious arrangements for their comfort. Instead of chairs large stuffed animals were offered them for seats.

The doctor liked to be asked to play on an old spinet. Tea and coffee were served by neat maids, who were not forbidden to join their laughter to the company's as they moved about.

Warren Street has had other associations with the things of the mind. The imprint on some of Turner's "Liber Studiorum" plates, such as the beautiful "Straw-yard," reads: "London: Published, February 20, 1808, by C. Turner, No. 50 Warren Street, Fitzroy Square." Number 50 is quite unaltered, but its blackened brick, its plain doorway, and its old urn-and-spike area railings call for no sentimental description. Nor was there much sentiment in the contract under which Charles Turner engraved for his immortal namesake. When he had finished twenty out of fifty agreed plates he represented that eight guineas a plate was not enough. The result was that Turner did not speak to his engraver again for nineteen years. They were reconciled at last, and the engraver lived to be a trustee under Turner's will.

At No. 10 Warren Street—the ground-floor is now a shoemaker's shop—were engraved those truly national pictures, David Wilkie's "Village Politicians" and "Rent Day." Their painter gave Abraham Raimbach a partnership in the speculation, and his conception of the engraver's toil and dues was such that only one-fourth of the proceeds was to be Wilkie's and three-fourths were to be Raimbach's. This arrangement was inaugurated by the plate of "The Village Politicians." The engraver had seen this subject exhibited as the work of a young and unknown painter at the Royal Academy, where its effect on the town was comparable to that produced by Byron's "Childe Harold." He tells us, in his autobiography, that Wilkie's Blind Fiddler, in the print of that name,

is a portrait of an old man who played his fiddle for coppers in Oxford Street, "at the wall beyond Lord Harewood's house in Hanover Square." Wilkie painted the "Fiddler" within a stone's-throw of Warren Street in his second London dwelling, No. 10 Sol's Row, a site now covered by a large furniture establishment in the Hampstead Road.

These ploughmen of steel and copper were an interesting race. Raimbach served his apprenticeship to Hall, who had been a pupil of Ravenet and a chum of William Wynne Ryland, whose perverted talent, as we have seen, brought him to Tyburn. He mentions that the great Woollet, when he had completed a plate, would assemble his family on the stair-landing in his house at the corner of Charlotte and North Streets and lead them in three cheers. On special occasions he would also fire a cannon from the roof.

The old rurality of north-west London and the incursions of the London mob are seen in Hogarth's masterly picture, "The March to Finchley." It shows us the march of the Guards towards Scotland in 1745 when they had passed the turnpike. We see the two crowded and noisy inns on either side of the way. Between them, in the distance, the long file of the Guards is seen marching towards the Highgate slopes across open country. The riotous scene in the foreground is composed of laggards of the regiment, their wives and sweethearts, and a mob of camp-followers and town riff-raff. A signboard outside the Adam and Eve Tavern in the picture bears the words, "Tottenham Court Nursery," in allusion to George Taylor's school of pugilists. Hogarth introduces a prize-fight as a piece of by-play in the scene, and there is perhaps no figure in all his works more

wonderfully seized than that of the potman who is watching the fight with staring eyes, and with fists clenched in sympathy with the combatants. Of all such Tottenham Court revels only two relics linger, the name of the tavern and the name Eden Street, which was given to the street that displaced the "Adam and Eve" tea-gardens, once shaded by fruit-trees and furnished with arbours. Gone is the King's Head Tavern to give elbow-room to modern tram-cars. Tolmer's Square, where this widening of the street ends, occupies the site of a forgotten New River reservoir, whose waters wrinkled over the site of the small palace in which Edward IV, they say, fled the time with Jane Shore.

Historically, the Tottenham Court Road is interesting at its two extremities and in its middle. At all three points there have been changes. Whitefield's Tabernacle has been rebuilt, the north and south ends of the street have been widened. One recalls the little island of houses and shops that, at the foot of the Tottenham Court Road, formed Bozier's Court. Here, fifty years ago, and for long after, Mr. Westell had a shop which is mentioned in Lord Lytton's "My Novel." It is referred to in Book VII, Chapter IV. "One day three persons were standing before an old bookstall in a small passage leading from Oxford Street into Tottenham Court Road. . . . 'Look,' said one of the gentlemen to the other, 'I have discovered here what I have searched for in vain the last ten years, the Horace of 1580, the Horace of the Forty Commentators.' The shopman lurking within his hole like a spider for flies was now called out." Mr. Westell once assured me that he was the spider, and that he perfectly remembers the Lyttons, father and son, walking into his shop that day—not, however, to



buy a 1580 Horace, but to inquire the price of three-volume novels! When Bozier's Court was demolished there was an inquiry as to the origin of its name, and from a musty rate-book was dug the fact that early in the eighteenth century a constable of the parish named William Boozsher owned a plot of land at this corner. I am envious of these little men who owned London and whose epitaphs are in the map. A graceful essayist has exclaimed on the honour of sharing one's name with a rose, but a nurseryman's rose has now as short a time to stay as we or anything, whereas a street or even a "stairs" may last three centuries. If ever I reach the fields of asphodel I mean to talk with these onlie begetters and wall landlords of the ancient places. I shall seek out Mr. Ball who, I hope, will describe his Pond, even if he cannot justify it; and Farmer Goodman, whose opinion on the present condition and upkeep of his Fields should be interesting. Major Foubert must be full of stories about his "Place," Short will know what he grew in his Gardens, and I fancy that Thavie and Bartlett and little Took will be chatty.

If "Bozier's Court" is explained, Hanway Street is misunderstood. It did not, as some feign, take its name from Jonas Hanway, the first male Londoner to carry an umbrella, for as an existing tablet shows it dates back to 1721, when Hanway was but nine years old. The street seems to have been originally Hanover Yard, from which came "Hanway Yard," and Hanway Street. I have found the hybrid form, Hanneway Street, in a London manual published in 1755. The street is named "Handway" in a map of London published ten years earlier than this, but the vagaries of spelling in such cases are endless. Hanway Street has nothing at all to do with umbrellas, but it has



some interest for lovers of the game of draughts. The tavern at its junction with the Tottenham Court Road bears the name of the "Blue Posts," and this house (now rebuilt) was once kept by Joshua Sturges, author of a well-known guide to the game of draughts, published in 1800, and dedicated by permission to the Prince of Wales. His epitaph in St. Pancras Churchyard has long been obliterated, but it bore glowing testimony to his skill as a draughts-player and his qualities as a man.

Modern, blatant, and architecturally dull, this great street-corner is one of the ganglions of London's nervous system. It must have had this character when George Borrow stood here on a summer's day in 1824 to see a funeral go by. "Whose body is in that hearse?" he asked a little man of the shopkeeper class. "The mortal relics of Lord Byron," was the ceremonious answer. The funeral passed up the Tottenham Court Road on its way to Newstead. "Great poet, sir," said the little shopkeeper, "but unhappy."

Not often since has the democratic mind been turned to poetry on this spot. The evening omnibuses are heavy with the cares of Camden Town, Kentish Town, and Holloway. Fatigued or pulsing, here is the life of London in seething average. And one remembers that when Borrow's dapper little shopkeeper had commiserated Byron, he added, simply, "I, too, am frequently unhappy."

## CHAPTER VI

### LANE AND LABYRINTH

St. Giles's Village—The Resurrection Gate—The Ballad Shop—Soho—The Author of "Lacon"—The Clare Market Labyrinth—The Great Storm—"Ypol"—A Sinister Archway—A Night of Terrors—A Murder and its Literature—The Owl—In Search of a Mantelpiece—A Dynasty of Door-knockers—Chancery Lane and Shakespeare—Where Hazlitt talked—The Rolls Chapel—Ready to "Decompose Evidence"—The Inertia of London—A Great Corner

OVER the way, set back in its own air, St. Giles's Church talks to the sky of the little old parish and the graves beneath. Let us walk into the village by its High Street, down whose narrowness the yellow bus used to rattle. The bleached tower rises as in Hogarth's print of "Noon." In the churchyard sleeps George Chapman, the translator of Homer, and in the church, Andrew Marvell, the friend of Milton. And here is the little-known Resurrection Gate, of which we should know more if it were in Bruges. Coaches would pull up before it if it were near Hastings. Go up to it, and you are looking at a relievo of the Resurrection, with saints and sinners rising from their graves. Whole-hearted antiquaries have declared it a copy from Michelangelo, but Mr. Blotton (of Aldgate) would make it the creation of an obscure ship-carver. And he is almost certainly right.

St. Giles's began as a Middlesex village, became an Irish "rookery," and is now a safe and ventilated labyrinth through which you may wander to Charing Cross or Covent Garden. In Broad Street, in a hazy hour, you may still receive a strong impression of village separateness and a mothering church. The district has a certain self-containment, and the small miscellaneous shop is frequent. One of these is almost a village shop, in which eggs are peeping out among newspapers. Groceries, toys, and Eccles cakes mingle with penny fiction; penny condiments dot the shelves, tiny bottles of sauce (the glory of a single dinner), and French capers, and pencils, and almanacs, and sweets—not Cockney sweets, but pebbly lollipops and aniseed bouncers. And ballads that exhale early Victorian jest and the Cockney "v."

The town movements of the last twenty-four years have affected the whole inter-arterial region which stretched without a break from Regent Street to Lincoln's Inn. Of the three great districts so contained, the great Clare Market region, which was Cockney, has been spirited away. St. Giles's, which was Irish, stands ventilated and rather empty. Soho, which is foreign, after ceding its Alsace to the Charing Cross Road, and its Lorraine to Shaftesbury Avenue, preserves its compact labyrinths and cosmopolitan charm. The man who is tired of London might retreat to Soho very comfortably for the rest of his life. Within its bounding arteries, Oxford Street, Charing Cross Road, Shaftesbury Avenue, and Regent Street, he can find all the conveniences and amenities of life, and not a few of its modest luxuries. Soho can offer him rooms in which only the muted roar of London will reach his ear; social restaurants in which he can dine in several languages, theatres on its fringe

for his entertainment, and hospitals in its centre for his healing. He will never want for books, or pictures, or oysters. He will pass the cruet to advanced young men and women, to the writers who talk of their "art," and to artists who paint their mental condition. The charm of old streets and illustrious names will be ever at his hand, and he may even learn the way to Golden Square—that last secret of London topography.

A man who did retire to Soho, from sheer unfitness to live elsewhere, was Charles Caleb Colton, and he quitted it only to die miserably. He had been Rector of Tiverton and Vicar of Kew, but, as a sympathetic friend remarked, he could live in Soho at a sixth of the expense, "and he acted accordingly." It is unlikely that either of his parishes missed its parson, unless it found a more careless incumbent, which was scarcely possible. It was at Tiverton that Colton rushed from a death-bed to his church, and poured forth an exhortation full of home thrusts and in favour of strict morals, concluding: "You wonder to hear such things from me! But if you had been where I was just now, and heard and seen what I did, you would have been convinced it is high time to reform our courses—and I, for my part, am determined to begin." But the parson was the first to lapse. Next Sunday he gabbled through a fifteen minutes' sermon, and was seen at the church-door putting his dogs and gun into his gig for a sporting journey. At Kew, Colton kept his cigars under the pulpit, where, he said, the temperature was exactly right.

In Soho's warm precincts Colton, wisely resolving to be as little like a vicar as possible, turned wine-merchant. He had always a nice Soho taste in wine, and in his Princes Street garret, overlooking the



### A GLIMPSE OF SOHO (FOUBERTS' PLACE)

SOHO, AFTER CEDING ITS ALSACE TO THE CHARING CROSS ROAD AND ITS LORRAINE TO SHAFTESBURY AVENUE, PRESERVES ITS COMPACT LABYRINTHS AND COSMOPOLITAN CHARM (P. 139)





graves of St. Anne's Church, he would produce a superb bottle of claret or port for a chance guest. His wine-dealing was carried on in a cellar sardonically chosen beneath a Methodist chapel in Dean Street. There a friend found him among casks and sawdust. "Come down, *facilis descensus Averni!*" was the greeting he received. "You have Methodism over your head, Colton; I wonder your wine does not turn sour, belonging as it does to a son of the Church." But Colton pointed out that wine is reconciling and that the doxies never conflict in a cellar.

Under Soho's "sorry spire" Colton wrote his "Lacon," of which the first volume appeared in 1820. It consists of short reflections and opinions on the conduct of private and public life. He wrote it on scraps of paper and blank sides of letters. His room boasted no carpet; a deal table, a few rickety chairs, and a broken inkpot placed in a tea-saucer were its furniture. Alaric Watts, who went there, says that it was a Grub Street author's garret whose inmate, however, bore the stamp of a gentleman, and could produce a bottle of wine whose perfume filled the room.

Colton is said to have been too much indebted for his Laconics to Bacon's "Essays" and William Burdon's "Materials for Thinking," yet the book is not ordinary. Many maxims in "Lacon" should have been useful to their author, but his own bark was ill-steered to the end. He had often associated with Thurtell, the murderer of Weare, and when the Vicar of Kew suddenly disappeared from Soho at the time of the murder, it was feared that he had himself fallen a victim to the gang. He had only gambled with them, and was now in flight from his creditors. He was next seen in Paris, unkempt and careworn. When

his life could only be prolonged by a surgical operation the philosopher of "Lacon" grimly decided to end it, and he blew out his brains in the house of a friend at Fontainebleau. He had been badly cast for a part in the drama of life, but he knew good wine when he tasted it, and good poetry when he read it. And he was wise for others.

It has been given to the Londoner of to-day to witness the greatest evisceration of the town that has been known since the Fire of 1666. A little more than a dozen years ago the Clare Market region was a humming neighbourhood, full of race and tradition, a secret labyrinth without omnibuses or newsboys. All the traditions of piecemeal change, casualness, and compromise which have made London picturesque were flouted in the Kingsway and Aldwych scheme. The surfaces of the new arteries are now the palimpsest of a populous quarter, of which St. Mary's and St. Clement's churches are the gracious relics. The site of Booksellers' Row is defined by the churches, but few Londoners could now locate the Strand entries of Lower Drury Lane, Catherine Street, Newcastle Street, or trace the line of Wych Street, which ten years ago might recall Theodore Hook's remark that he never passed through it without being blocked up by a hearse, a coal-wagon, a mud-cart, and the Lord Mayor's carriage.

All through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries these streets, with Clare Market for their hub, seethed with humble London life. The tall old houses, built to last, had their picturesque moods. Especially in a late autumn afternoon, when the setting sun flashed on the higher windows, and brought out bits of red brick and slopes of red tile, these doomed streets in which generations of Londoners had been born seemed

to plead for respite. Nowhere were you more in the interior of London. In summer evenings on the smooth asphalted roadways the girls danced round barrel-organs, the boys rushed up and down on roller-skates, and the mothers gossiped on the narrow pavements. On a winter afternoon the funeral cortège of a publican would block the street for hours, developing pomp and public approval. And in all this intricate daily pettiness you were conscious of the centuries and the generations.

Clare Market had been an old family affair. Its founder was John Holles, second Earl of Clare and Baron of Haughton, who married Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Lord Vere. Hence the names, Holles Street, Clare Market, Haughton Street, and Vere Street. Other family names and titles were transferred to Denzil, Stanhope, Sheffield, and Gilbert Streets. In 1661 the earl obtained the grant of a market, which long served an aristocratic neighbourhood in whose annals shine many names. The Earl of Craven became its hero, the exiled Queen of Bohemia its cynosure, Orator Henley its buffoon.

Hogarth came to be snug at the Shepherd and His Flock Club, whose weekly gatherings of artists were held at the Bull's Head Tavern. For this club he engraved a silver tankard with a shepherd and his flock.

Some fifty years earlier Dr. Radcliffe took his glass at the "Bull's Head," and, taking it, heard the result of a shipping enterprise to the East Indies into which he had been drawn by his friend Betterton, the tragedian, whose name is now borne by a street in the neighbourhood. The returning ship was captured by the French within sight of England. By this disaster Betterton lost his entire savings and was ruined. But Radcliffe, on hearing of the news,

filled up his glass and made a remark singularly like that which is attributed to Scott at the time of the Constable failure ; he said that his loss of six or eight thousand pounds was not a great matter—"he had no more to do but to go up so many pairs of stairs to make himself whole again." He lived to bequeath for the building of the Radcliffe Library, that glory of Oxford, the sum of £40,000.

There were many quiet, unexpected, precincts around Clare Market. One was Craven Buildings, whose row of quiet buff houses occupied precisely the fork of Aldwych. Here at No. 17 had lived Dr. Arne, who personally published his music to Milton's "Comus" from this house, and here, I have no doubt, he brooded over the singularly insulting description of himself by Mortimer, the painter who said that Arne's "eyes looked like two oysters just opened for sauce, put upon an oval side-dish of beetroot." The scene-painter, Frank Hayman, also lived here while he was engaged at Drury Lane Theatre, and Mrs. Bracegirdle, who is buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, and Hannah Pritchard, who has a memorial in Poet's Corner. Still later Madame Vestris was a tenant ; and Elliston, the actor and manager, Lamb's "joyousest of once embodied spirits," lived in this blind alley, which I often entered for the pleasure of being turned back.

One of the straightest and longest streets was Stanhope Street. It ran between and parallel to Vere Street and Drury Lane. The new Kingsway has bisected it, and the remainders on either side have been demolished. It led towards Great and Little Wild Streets, named after old Wild House, the home of a duchess in Charles I's reign and of an ambassador in the next. In 1903 the crowbars were at work on the

old Baptist chapel, in Little Wild Street, in which an annual service of thanksgiving and of allusion to the Great Storm of 1703 was kept up for two centuries. This storm had spread death and destruction through London. Two thousand stacks of chimneys were blown down. The damage in the City alone was computed at nearly two millions. Many people believed that the war of the elements was accompanied by an earthquake. In the Thames a number of ships were driven down-stream, and over five hundred wherries were lost. In the sermons preached at Little Wild Street these happenings were recalled, possibly with embellishments. Of "special providences" there were hundreds. A house in the Strand, containing fourteen persons, collapsed, and no one was hurt. In Poultry two boys were lying in a garret; a huge stack of chimneys falling in crashed their way through their floor and all the other floors down to the cellar, followed by the bed with the boys in it, who awoke in the nether regions merely wondering how they came there.

Here and there the Clare Market demolitions exhaled a last fragrance. Amid dust and debris I remember seeing this damaged inscription on a stuccoed wall: YPOL. These letters were part of the name, Maypole Alley. This little lane had led down to the Maypole in the Strand.

What's not destroy'd by Time's devouring hand?  
Where's Troy, and where's the Maypole in the Strand?

The improvements extended across Holborn to Kingsgate Street. A fire brigade lamp-post stood at the foot of the lane, oddly perpetuating the note of urgency which belonged to the corner when



Mrs. Gamp's clients ran up the street looking for pebbles with which to assail her window.

One of the most interesting vestiges—not finally destroyed until this year—was the old horseshoe archway on the west side of Lincoln's Inn Fields leading into what was yesterday Sardinia Street. With it disappeared the two fine old houses in Lincoln's Inn Fields under which it has bent its sturdy back during two centuries. Shakespeare never saw this arch, but Bacon may have seen it planned. Only two years after Shakespeare's death, when newly known as Lord Verulam, he was concerned in that urbanization of Lincoln's Inn Fields by Inigo Jones in which this sinister little archway had its part. Twenty years ago you passed through it from the desolate exclusiveness of Lincoln's Inn Fields (the garden was not opened to the public till 1895), into the populous dirt and colour of the whole Clare Market region ; either way that squat and grudging archway led from one London world to another.

And in its gloom lurked its own portentous memories.

For the district was long a centre of Roman Catholic life. It may have had this character as early as 1603 when Guy Fawkes took a house "in the fields beyond Clement's Inn." There the Gunpowder Plotters met to take their preliminary oath of secrecy, which they solemnly administered to each other, "kneeling upon their knees, with their hands laid upon a primer." Catesby then disclosed his plans, and the party went upstairs, where, if one accept Winter's story, they received the sacrament from Father Garnett. If it be true that the house which witnessed this dark pact was in Butcher Row, as one account declares, it follows that the most desperate of crimes





ST. MARY-LE-STRAND CHURCH

... THE PALIMPSEST OF A POPULOUS QUARTER OF WHICH ST. MARY'S AND  
ST. CLEMENT'S CHURCHES ARE THE GRACIOUS RELICS (P. 142)



was planned and "consecrated" on the ground now covered by the Law Courts—one of the many topographical coincidences in London's story.

While I write portions of the Sardinian chapel and arch are mingling their dust in a final ruin. Nor is it the first time that arch and chapel have suffered together. A medallion in the British Museum preserves the scene in Lincoln's Inn Fields on the night of 11 December, 1688—one of the most terrible ever seen in London. On the 11th King James had flung the Great Seal into the river, and had fled his capital: anarchy threatened, and every passion was loosed. Macaulay has described the scenes of that night, when this archway became a gully of human wrath, fear, and fanaticism. In the medallion it is plainly to be seen, though inaccurately drawn, with its two flanking passages. Yet this outbreak did not hold so many terrors as the years of slow persecution in which the archway saw trembling priests and furtive spies creep through its shadow.

In the Gordon Riots of 1780, the chapel of St. Anselm and Cecilia fell a prey to the mob. Then happier times dawned, and through this arch of memories came Fanny Burney to her wedding. Benjamin Franklin passed under it often when he worked at Watts's printing-office in Wild Court. The spot became a place of reconciliation when the Red Mass came to be celebrated in the Sardinian chapel, and was attended by Roman Catholic members of the Bench and Bar on the opening of the Law Courts after the Long Vacation.

Nearer to our day than these old unhappy far-off conflicts is a drama of crime which has left its mark on nineteenth-century literature. It was Theodore Hook who wrote the oft-quoted lines (they were

once quoted at a dinner-party by Browning, who was extremely annoyed when another guest helped him out) :—

His throat they cut from ear to ear,  
His brains they battered in,  
His name was Mr. William Weare,  
He lived at Lyon's Inn.

Lyon's Inn stood between Wych Street and Holywell Street, its last relic being (as I seem to remember) a walled-up door in the latter street, adorned with two lions' heads. The above lines, which have also been attributed to John Wilson Croker, were part of a mock Catnach ballad on the murder of Weare by his friend John Thurtell in the autumn of 1823.

Thurtell, conceiving himself to have been overreached by Weare in gambling transactions, planned to murder him, and to rob him of a considerable "private bank" which he was known to carry in the pocket of an under-waistcoat. He was callously assisted by a Mr. Probert, a spirit-dealer, who had a cottage in Gill's Hill Lane, near Elstree, in Hertfordshire, off the St. Albans Road. Thurtell decided that this neighbourhood should be the scene of his intended attack on Weare. He had visited Probert there many times, and knew the surrounding lanes and fields intimately.

On the evening of 23 October, Thurtell, and a man named Hunt met Weare at Rexworthy's Billiard Rooms, in Spring Gardens, and Thurtell asked him if he would go down to Elstree for two or three days' shooting. Weare accepted this invitation, and on the following day, in his chambers at Lyon's Inn, packed up some clothes in a green carpet-bag, together with a backgammon-board, and equipped himself with a double-barrelled gun. While he was thus engaged,

Thurtell and Hunt were buying a pair of pocket-pistols at a pawnbroker's in Marylebone. This done, they went to the "Coach and Horses," in Conduit Street, where they met Probert. Thurtell arranged to drive down to Elstree in a gig and to pick up Weare, by appointment, at the end of Oxford Street. He wished Hunt and Probert to drive down in another gig, and if they passed him Hunt was to wait at a certain spot not far from the lane leading to the cottage. The circumstances of the drive into Hertfordshire can be passed over, and it needs little imagination to picture the horror of the dark Elstree lane, heavy with the scent of autumn leaves, which flew from the feet of pursuer and pursued, and the struggle in the dim light thrown by the lamps of Thurtell's gig.

The clumsy tactics of the murderers proved their undoing. Probert, Hunt, and Thurtell were arrested as a precaution, and inquiry became hot. Hunt, in his alarm, told the magistrates where the body would be found, and Probert, who had never known Weare, though he knew what his fate was to be, made a clean breast of the facts. In the result he was called as the principal witness against Thurtell and Hunt, who were tried for the murder at Hertford Assizes. They were found guilty, and both condemned to death.

The most famous literary relic of Thurtell's trial is to be found in the writings of Thomas Carlyle. His use of the word "gig" as a synonym of respectability had its origin in the following dialogue between counsel and a witness: "What sort of person was Mr. Weare?" "He was always a respectable person." "What do you mean by respectable?" "He kept a gig." Carlyle's fierce humour seized on this, and afterwards, when he was storming at respectabilities and unrealities, gigs were not far from his mind. The

principal allusion is, I think, in his essay on Richter, but "gigs" were henceforth among his literary properties, and he uses the word even in the grandiose conclusion of his "French Revolution."

Edward FitzGerald's disposition to see good in Thurtell was perhaps shared by George Borrow, who portrays him minutely in "Lavengro" and makes him "King of the Flashmen" in "The Zincali."

Archbishop Whately did not disdain to discuss Thurtell's character in one of his annotations to Bacon, where he wrote: "When Thurtell, the murderer, was executed there was a shout of derision raised against the phrenologists for saying that his organ of benevolence was large. But they replied that there was also large destructiveness and a moral deficiency which would account for a man goaded to rage (by being cheated of almost all that he had had by the man he killed) committing that act. It is a remarkable confirmation of their view that a gentleman who visited the prison where Thurtell was confined (shortly after the execution) found the jailers, etc., full of pity and affection for him. They said he was a kind, good-hearted fellow, so obliging and friendly that they never had a prisoner whom they so much regretted. And such seems to have been his general character, when not influenced at once by the desire of revenge and of gain."

Nor was a poet wanting to invest the crime with hues of night and horror. In lines not unworthy of Poe, the Rev. John Mitford described it in the terms of a weird owliness:—

Owl, that lovest the midnight sky,  
Where the casements blaze  
With the faggot's rays,  
Look, oh! look! What seest thou there?



Owl, what's this  
That snort and hiss—  
And why do thy feathers shiver and stare?  
'Tis he, 'tis he—  
He sits 'mid the three,  
And a breathless Woman is on the stair.

An interesting circumstance about these lines is that they were the last which that strange being, Beau Brummell, copied into his poetry album.

It is said that Thurtell's fate appealed so strongly to his friends of the prize-ring that a serious plan was laid to rescue him at the last moment, and that this would in all probability have been carried out if the sum of £500 necessary for the hire of men could have been obtained from Thurtell's family. The pity lavished on the condemned man was scornfully referred to by Sir Walter Scott in his "Journal." Yet Scott himself, in 1828, took the trouble to visit Gill's Hill Lane and to write his comments on the crime which had made it infamous. In a madcap letter to Bernard Barton, Charles Lamb exclaims apropos of nothing: "I can't distinguish veal from mutton—nothing interests me—'tis twelve o'clock, and Thurtell is just now coming out upon the New Drop."

In Lincoln's Inn Fields I once received a curious impression of London's small concealed antiquities. In his "Book for a Rainy Day" John Thomas Smith talks of the old Willow Walk along the Thames at Millbank. Here, he says, "on many a glowing evening Gainsborough, accompanied by his friend Collins, amused himself by sketching docks and nettles, which afforded the Wynants and Cuyyp-like effects to the foregrounds of his rich and glowing landscapes." This Collins, he goes on to say, was a modeller of rustic subjects for tablets of chimney-pieces "in vogue

about seventy years back." Smith wrote in 1830, or thereabouts. He adds that Collins usually took his subjects from "Æsop's Fables," and that his work may here and there be met with in old houses: "I recollect one, that of the Bear and Beehives, in the back drawing-room of the house formerly the mansion of the Duke of Ancaster, on the western side of Lincoln's Inn Fields."

It occurred to me that this mantelpiece might still remain, and my whim was to find it. Lindsey House is now divided into two houses, each occupied by firms of solicitors. The Bear and the Beehive mantelpiece might be in either No. 59 or No. 60. It seemed a little stupid to interrupt, even for a moment, the legal labours of Lincoln's Inn Fields. But I found the mantelpiece, and I do not know who was the more interested; I to find it in a business office, or the occupants of the room to find it in a book. But there it was, fulfilling expectations—a mantelpiece in use. There is a fascination in such time-defying trifles. I like to look up, in passing, at the old dated rain-pipes in Chancery Lane, inscribed "1779." In Bedford Row there are water-pipes as old as the street, bearing such dates as 1727, and in Staple Inn you may see a cistern which was in use before the Restoration. The eighteenth-century torch-extinguishers outside houses in Berkeley Square and neighbouring streets, and in Gower Street, are equally remindful of the fact that man's smallest chattels survive man.

In the book I have quoted Smith has this curious passage, which relates to the year 1787:—

"It is rather extraordinary that mimicry with me was not confined to the voice, for I could in many instances throw my features into a resemblance of the person whose voice I imitated. Indeed, so ridiculous

were several of these gesticulations, that I remember diverting one of my companions by endeavouring to look like the various lion-headed knockers as we passed through a long street. Skilful, however, as I was declared to be in some of my attempts, I could not in any way manage the dolphin knockers in Dean Street, Fetter Lane. Their ancient and fish-like appearance were certainly many fathoms beyond my depth, and as much by reason of my being destitute of gills, and the nose of that finny tribe extending nearly in width to its tremendous mouth, I was obliged to give up the attempt."

He adds that when he first knew Dean Street seventeen out of its twenty-four houses were adorned with these brass dolphin knockers. Well, forty-two years passed, and on 17 May, 1829, Smith, who had become a staid official at the British Museum, had the curiosity to visit Dean Street to see how his old "brazen-faced acquaintances" were getting on, and to his sorrow he found Dean Street was "nearly as deficient of door-knockers as a churchyard is of its earliest tombstones, for out of seventeen only three remained."

Another forty years passed slowly over Dean Street, when a correspondent of "Notes and Queries," interested in Smith's story, was moved to make a journey of discovery. He found only one dolphin knocker left, on the door of No. 6.

Thirty more years went by, and I in turn joined the immemorial lunatic procession to Little Dean Street to look for dolphin knockers. But the Methuselah of 1869 was gone, and the houses themselves had followed their ornaments. I gave up an hour to knocker-hunting in the neighbourhood, but never a dolphin appeared, though many were old and beautiful.

There was a lion's head and ring knocker in Gunpowder Alley, and others in Hind Court. No. 3 Red Lion Court had a very good knocker, into the design of which was introduced a bat with outstretched wings. An old knocker of No. 9 Bell's Buildings, Salisbury Square, was adorned with the figure of a naked boy playing on a pipe.

In this part of London my affection is given to Chancery Lane, and particularly to the spot at which the "Academy" office faced the great gateway of Lincoln's Inn during the years 1896-1903. Embodied in that gateway, the Past looked us gravely in the face. In a few strides we passed into the gloom of a portal that was standing fifty years before Shakespeare was born. On wet days a passing "Favourite" omnibus splashed mud on the two buildings impartially. The Chancery Lane mud is itself antique; for in the reign of Edward I the lane was a noted quagmire. When it became impassable to knight, monk, and citizen, John Breton, Custos of London, barred it up altogether. Or it may be that the Bishop of Chichester desired privacy. He lived where Chichester Rents now offers a short cut into New Square, and it was he who maintained the bar for ten years. When asked to explain he threw the responsibility on the sheriff. That gentleman found it expedient to remove the obstruction, but he left the mud to be dealt with by posterity. And we are still dealing with it.

The gateway was built by Sir Thomas Lovel in 1518. Plain in its majesty, this is one of the treasures of London. Even its oaken doors are centuries old, and Americans sometimes offer five-pound notes for one of its bolts or fittings. Pass by it at night, when high and small the one gas-jet flickers over the great arch, and the dark mass of the building rises through the

unusual gloom, and you will gain a sense of London's multi-peopled past.

Assuredly Shakespeare passed this way. His patron, the Earl of Southampton, lived at the head of the lane. The wall of Southampton House ran up the east side to Holborn, and on it Gerard botanized for "Whitlow grasse" or "the English Nailewoort," which, he says, "groweth plentifully upon the backe wall in Chancerie Lane belonging to the Earle of Southampton, in the suburbs of London."

Where Shakespeare walked, two of his finest commentators pitched their tents afterwards. In 1809 Charles Lamb, after seeing his "Specimens of the Dramatic Poets" published by Longmans, lived for a few months at No. 34 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane; and William Hazlitt went thither to prepare his Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth. It was here that Lamb addressed to Manning, then in China, the question: "How do you like the Mandarinesses? Are you on some little footing with any of them?" But the ground is especially Hazlitt's. Here, lodging with Mr. Walker, a tailor, he began his unhappy philanderings with Sarah Walker. He spent his evenings at the Southampton Tavern, now rebuilt out of his knowledge, and sketched the company in his masterly essay, "On Coffee-house Politicians." He does not spare to ridicule the ignorance and Philistinism of the frequenters. "What would a linen-draper from Holborn think if I were to ask him after the clerk of St. Andrew's, the immortal, the forgotten Webster?" The most romantic digression from common talk and fruitless arguments that he enjoyed here was a discussion on the comparative merits of Gray and Byron as poets.



Nothing in London—as I have known London—is more lost and forgotten than the small, complete, and beautiful precinct of the Rolls Chapel on the east side of Chancery Lane. It disappeared in 1892. The eye lingered, the heart knew itself again, at that open archway giving into a cobbled courtyard and a chapel quiet.

In Rolls Yard for many years a great Scotchman dispensed English justice with purity and dignity that have never been surpassed. The place was a little legal kingdom by itself. It contained the Rolls Chapel, the Rolls Court House, and the residence of the Master of the Rolls. As a seat of justice it was never more famous than under Sir William Grant, between 1801 and 1817. Sir William was descended from the Grants of Baldarnie, and was a native of Elchies, in Moray. He had begun his legal career in Canada, but returned to England to become a great Parliamentarian, and the trusted friend of Pitt. In Parliament he triumphed in a very unusual manner—by severe and unassailable logic. Lord Brougham said of Grant's oratory in the House that it was "from the first to the last, throughout, pure reason and the triumph of pure reason."

In Rolls Yard Grant worked, slept, and worshipped. His was the strong simple mind that knows how to isolate itself from the infinite solicitations of London, and by many refusals to win public observation and an acknowledged identity with the very order and topography of the town. There, discarding every art of display, he listened in unbroken silence to the case before him until all had been said in advocacy. Then came a deeply expectant silence, for it was a certainty that the judgment about to be pronounced would be a marvel of clear thinking and apt expression. Charles Butler's description of Grant's judicial eloquence is





### CLARE MARKET

ALL THROUGH THE 13TH AND 19TH CENTURIES THESE STREETS, WITH CLARE MARKET FOR THEIR HUB, SEETHED WITH HUMBLE LONDON LIFE (P. 142)



fine. "In hearing him it was impossible not to think of the character given by Menelaus, by Homer, or rather by Pope, 'He spoke no more than just the thing he ought.' But Sir William did much more ; in decompounding and analysing an immense mass of confused and contradictory matter and forming clear and unquestionable results, the sight of his mind was infinite. His exposition of Acts, and of the consequences deducible from them, his discussion of former decisions, and showing their legitimate weight and authority, and their real bearings upon the point in question, were above praise ; but the whole was done with such admirable ease and simplicity, that while real judges felt its supreme excellence, the herd of hearers believed that they could have done the same.

"Never was the merit of Dr. Johnson's definition of a perfect style, 'proper words in proper places,' more sensibly felt than it was by those who listened to Sir William Grant. The charm of it was indescribable ; its effect on the hearers was that which Milton describes, when he paints Adam listening to the angel after the angel has ceased to speak. Often and often has the reminiscent beheld the Bar listening at the close of a judgment given by Sir William with the same feeling of admiration at what they had heard and the same regret that it was heard no more."

These Rhadamanthine judgments were delivered under conditions which would stagger the Law to-day. Commonly, they were reserved till the evening, by candle-light, in the stuffy little court. But first Grant had dined. He no more scamped his dinner than his cases. A bottle of Madeira would imperil the wits of most Chancery judges to-day. Sir William drank his bottle of Madeira at dinner, and after dinner he drank

a bottle of port. Then he was ready to "decompound evidence."

Chancery Lane remains legal from end to end. Most Londoners enter it only at a crisis of their lives. You see a little party in mourning, gathered like birds on the pavement, and you guess their errand. It touches the imagination to remember that in the immensity of London every day brings anxiety and crisis to a large number of Londoners. Of these pangs nothing is seen in the town's visage, no ripple or sharp interruption in its vast usualness. To how many sufferers has this thought been bitter! To how many has it brought a secret joy! Shakespeare knew the stupendous inertia of a great city in an hour of catastrophe. He makes the plotters of Cæsar's death pause in their debate to dispute the exact point of the horizon at which the sun will presently rise on their bloody work, and suddenly we are aware of the sleep and unconsciousness of Rome's millions.

In all writings on London there must be the fallacy of generalization, for we hear only the general heart-beat. And nowhere do we hear it plainer than at this populous corner, where Temple Bar once seemed to divide the affairs of the east and west, but where now they appear to be fanned into coalescence by a monster's wings. Here, in the golden haze of an autumn afternoon, how big, how beautiful, is London! What piling up of roofs and towers, windows agleam in the level sunlight, summits tipped with fire!

'Tis Eldorado—Eldorado plain,  
The Golden City!

## CHAPTER VII

### THE STREET OF THE SAGGING PURPOSE

The Mid-London Crowd—"Where's the Maypole?"—The Man in the Street—"Swimming the Hellespont"—Street Portraiture—The Shops that Were—Doyley's—The Polite Grocers and Mad Hatters—A Phrenologist—"The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"—Sotheby's—Homeric Book Sales—"Milk-white Gosset"—The Vellum Cure—Roger Payne—A Falstaffian Memorandum—Art among the Ruins—Dr. Monroe's Guests—Turner's Farewell—Rowlandson and his Cronies—C.K.—Norfolk Street—Dr. Brocklesby—Garrick's Monument—Dan Leno

LET us stroll to the Strand. Tortured in body, the street keeps its ancient character. It is neither of the east nor of the west. It is a link that has become an interregnum. Its shops are for the passer-by, its hotels for the pilgrims, its taverns and theatres for leisure. A certain sagging of purpose and uplifting of curiosity may be observed in its unsorted mid-London crowd. More than any other street it is the epitome of London, however weak in an impossible rôle.

The mind, indeed, selects the Strand as that bank and shoal of time on which the Londoner is seen, and seen no more. Tennyson no more; he loved the Strand; Sir Henry Hawkins no more, looking into shop-windows; Irving no more, playing Lear to himself in his hansom-cab. But, indeed, half the Strand has attended its people to the tomb. In our own time the contours and skylines have changed, tributary streets

have been shorn away, old buildings that were household words have disappeared. Exeter Hall is now a memory, Coutts's Bank has crossed the street, the Strand Theatre is no more, and the Tivoli Music-hall has appeared. The pageant of the Lowther Arcade has left not a wrack behind, the "Gaiety" is not the old "Gaiety," and "Short's" is not the old "Short's." Two great hotels have obliterated Cecil Street and Beaufort Buildings, those comfortable purlieus. The Kingsway improvement has displaced a series of lanes and courts on the north side of the street; but on the south side some quaint inlets survive. Across Strand Lane the clothes line is stretched; the Adelphi Arches are still in seeming the habitation of dragons; George Yard, giving access to the Adelphi, still pleases the artist. But gone is Thanet Place, that little oblong Sabbath of the east Strand, where but yesterday the milk gathered cream at the lodging-house door.

How many men of the books have been figures in the Strand! Byron came to see the hippopotamus that looked like Lord Liverpool and the "Ursine Sloth" that had the voice and manner of his valet. Dickens knew the Strand like one of his own books; the "Pickwick Papers" were issued close to Norfolk Street. Hard by was the Crown and Anchor Tavern where Bobus Smith and "Conversation" Sharp and Erskine and Curran talked, and where Herbert Spencer came to eat his chop when he was helping to edit the "Economist" at No. 340. Mary Ann Evans was then working on the "Westminster Review" at No. 142, and the pair must have been seen often on the pavement, though not for long, for their favourite promenade was the river terrace of Somerset House. Haydon, the painter, began his long "agony of self-assertion" in the Strand, at the foot of Catherine



Street, and on his first Sunday morning in London he put up a fervent prayer for protection and success in St. Mary's Church, rising from his knees, "calm, cool, illuminated, as if crystal circulated through my veins." Alas !

We have a curious glimpse of Coleridge in the Strand, where De Quincey found him in the "corner" office at No. 348 Strand, a little east of Exeter 'Change. One day he was walking there lost in day-dreams, when he began to wave his arms about him in some mysterious correspondence with his thoughts. In the course of these gyrations he was so unfortunate as to find his hand in a stranger's pocket. This astonished person at once charged him with a felonious intention, whereupon the poor youth sobbed out his innocence, and added the perfectly true explanation, "I thought, sir—I thought I was swimming the Hellespont." Few things give one a more intimate sense of the old streets of London than a well-etched portrait of the man in the street, in which the light of common day suddenly prevails over the trimmed lamp of biography. Charles Lamb, who could not squeeze out a tear for Byron, and who mourned strictly as he felt, would, it appears, have been less affected by the death of Nelson if he had not met him in a London street a few weeks before Trafalgar. To Hazlitt he wrote, on 10 November, 1805: "Wasn't you sorry for Lord Nelson? I have followed him in fancy ever since I saw him walking in Pall Mall (I was prejudiced against him before), looking just as a Hero should look; and I have been very much cut about it indeed."

The peculiar appeal of an encounter in the street, when personality or circumstance has in some way rendered it significant, was understood by John Bright,

who in the greatest of his speeches, perhaps the greatest to which the House of Commons has ever listened, made use of such an incident. Reminding the House of the gaps which war had made on its own benches, Bright referred to the death in the Crimea of Colonel Boyle, the member for Frome, and said, "I met him a short time before he went out, near Hyde Park Corner. I asked him whether he was going out. He answered he was afraid he was ; not afraid in the sense of personal fear—he knew not that ; but he said with a look and a tone I shall never forget, 'It's no light matter for a man who has a wife and five little children.' The stormy Euxine is now in his grave ; his wife is a widow, his children orphans." These sentences were not the least contributory to the effect of a speech which pierced and paralysed the House. Simple as they were, their particularization of Hyde Park Corner, as the scene of farewell, was true art.

Nowhere do we see old Hogarth so clearly as in a story of Barry the painter. Asked whether he had ever seen Hogarth, he replied, "Yes, once. I was walking with Joe Nollekens through Cranbourne Alley, when he exclaimed, 'There, there's Hogarth!' 'What!' I exclaimed, '*that little man in the sky-blue coat ?*' Off I ran, and though I lost sight of him for only a moment or two, when I turned the corner into Castle Street he was patting one of two quarrelling boys on the back, and looking steadfastly at the expression in the coward's face, cried, 'D——n him ! if I would take it from him ! At him again.'" The delineator of London cinematographed !

Near the Strand is the spot where Sydney Smith, Tom Moore, and Luttrell fell into such convulsions of laughter over one of Smith's sallies that they were

obliged to reel each his own way home without further speech.

In the Strand's new buildings of the mammoth order we are apt to forget the numberless small shops and upstairs businesses which these have displaced. There must be old Londoners who remember the dozen shops that stood where now the railings of the Charing Cross Station courtyard stretch along the street. One of these was Yeate's famous ham-and-tongue shop. Another was Warren's blacking warehouse. This was a good old-fashioned shop, with double bow-windows, and its number, 30, was conspicuous in the firm's advertisements :—

Hasten to Warren's, at 30, the Strand,  
To purchase your Blacking, the best in the land !  
And for polish and surface, and brightness of hue,  
No mirror shall then be compared to your shoe.

Warren was a pioneer of poetical advertising, but the story that Lord Byron wrote rhymes for him at half a crown a piece is sufficiently dealt with by the author of "Real Life in London." As for Dickens's youthful connexion with the Warrens, it is vaguely perpetuated by the red-coated Charing Cross Station shoeblacks who now polish the boots of Londoners near the site of his sorrows at Hungerford Stairs.

Next to Warren's, at the west corner of Villiers Street, was Roakes and Varty's book-shop. A little further east Bewlay's tobacco-shop stood as it does to-day. At No. 53, now dedicated to the "Living Pictures," a Mr. Solomon sat at the receipt of custom, and advertised on the front of the building his willingness to cash "Irish and Scotch notes."

Shops of a type which are noticeably scarce to-day in the Strand were those of Minier, Adams & Nash,

seedsmen, next to Coutts's old bank, and Daft & Son, at No. 69, hot-house builders. Good old shops were Leigh's map-shop, one door east of Bedford Street, and Caldwell's biscuit warehouse four doors west of it. This building is now the Windsor Tavern.

Exeter Hall, sixty years ago, was flanked by Hunt, the billiard-table-maker, and then came two medical establishments—Scott's Medical Repository (now a café) and the Medical Dissenter Office, now a sweet-shop. These buildings are unaltered. The latter was the Strand depot for the sale of Morrison's pills. "Knight's Shell Fish Warehouse" stood where Gow's now invites to oysters. At the foot of Catherine Street was the "Court Gazette" office.

A quaint shop on the south side of the Strand, No. 106, immediately opposite the aforesaid pill warehouse, was Dyte's, "Quill Merchants and Pen Manufacturers to Her Majesty." Burgess's antique and sternutative fish-sauce shop, close by, vanished only a few years ago. Messrs. Maggs, the library book-sellers, now occupy a building that was held by Mr. Miers, who there flourished as a miniature-frame-maker in days when the art of miniature was yet unthreatened by photography; and what forbids us to suppose that he framed the identical picture of "a lady reading a manuscript in an unfathomable forest," for Miss La Creevy, whose studio was "about half-way down" the Strand?

A great Strand shop in its day was Doyley's, whence the "doyley" of the dinner-table came. His premises were at No. 346, east of Exeter 'Change, and were said to have been built by Inigo Jones. The business itself was old enough to have been mentioned by Addison and Congreve. The Doyley of the Johnson period cut a pleasant social figure in the Strand, and the steps



A VANISHED ARCHWAY (LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS)

SHAKESPEARE NEVER SAW THIS ARCH, BUT BACON MAY HAVE SEEN IT PLANNED (P. 147)





of his shop, with an awning over them, were used for lounging and meeting. Another shopkeeper of social habits was William Clarke, the proprietor of Exeter 'Change, who was both learned and honest in all that concerned canes and walking-sticks.

Thomson, the music-seller, was another Exeter 'Change shopman of whom accounts have survived. His shop was crowded with musical amateurs and not a few composers of note. His shelves were full of old plays and pamphlets, and his talk of stories concerning Purcell and Croft and Boyce; he helped Sir John Hawkins greatly with his *History of Music*, and Richard Wilson, the painter, who was a critic of men, was his crony.

There were also the Polite Grocers and the Mad Hatters. On his way to Exeter 'Change Byron must have passed the shop of the famous Polite Grocers, the brothers Aaron and John Trim. "Brother John and I," as they were called, weighed out their hyson and bohea for many years at 449 Strand. Every one knew the "Polite Grocers." The brothers were singular persons to look at, and they managed their whole business themselves. On every general subject they talked with the utmost affability, but on their own concerns they maintained a close reserve. They were never seen but in their shop and in their pew at St. Martin's Church.

At No. 71 the Strand flourished Lloyd the hatter, the historian and laureate of hats. He sold forty shapes, and knew how to glorify each. He assisted the public to remember his address by publishing these lines:—

Lloyd, the great Hatter, renowned far and near,  
 (Fame trumpets his name through the land)  
 Crowns with rich Castors, Prince, Peasant, and Peer,  
 At SEVENTY-ONE in the Strand.

With short naps and long naps, for heads large and small,  
 In thousands of shapes he can cater,  
 At his Depot of Taste, Fashion, Fancy, and all,  
 Just facing th' Adelphi Theatre.

Time has given to Mr. Lloyd's poetic advertisements a certain interest. From them we learn that the popular hat of the eighteen-thirties was the "Tilbury," though Lloyd considered it had too much character to suit many wearers. Here spake the artist, but the hatter made haste to add, "the shape of the face is immaterial, provided the complexion is not too dingy." He adds that, "neither overgrown nor little fat gentlemen" should wear this shape, whose virtues are compressed into these lines:—

For ease, form, and set,  
 The like never yet  
 Was seen—at least, so run opinions ;  
 Then ye Bloods and ye Whips,  
 In your "Tilbury" trips,  
 Look well to your upper dominions.

The "Tilbury" shape narrowed as it ascended, its brim curled rapidly at the sides, but was well splayed in front. Lloyd directed his customers to wear it rather forward, and a little to one side. Captain Gronow, duellist and diarist, wore the "Tilbury."

A more accommodating hat was the "Anglesea," with its perfectly straight chimney-pot and delicate brim.

To every head, to every face,  
 To every form and feature,  
 This Hat adds lustre, ease and grace—  
 Thus art combines with nature.

The "Anglesea" must have been a good hat for a statesman, and if I read certain portraits rightly it was worn

by the Duke of Wellington after he had assumed that character. But the "Wellington," named after him, was a more formidable headpiece, and dated no doubt from his military days :—

Bold, martial, in style—'twas designed for the face  
Of England's great Captain and Statesman, his Grace,  
Of whose talents and virtues, 'tis a type emblematic,  
Which in war is decision, in council emphatic.

From a rather small, well-curled brim, in which there is little benevolence, this hat widened upwards. It overhung the face like a cliff that recedes from the top, and suggested a crushing progress against obstacles.

The "Bon-Ton" hat was like the "Anglesea," but had more devil in its brim. The "Bit of Blood" was like a Wellington—built on a low elevation. It was all angle and curl, and squat at that. It was "admirably calculated for those who are about to ask favours, such being more readily granted when they seem less wanted, and no one could suppose that the saucy animation, which would be so strongly visible under this hat, could make the application from necessity." Lloyd further recommended the "Bit of Blood" to elderly gentlemen about to marry young widows, who "nine times in ten decide on the choice of a man from the cock of his hat."

Mr. Lloyd's talents seem to have made his rivals rather sore. Not much love was lost between him and Mr. Perring of No. 58 Strand. Mr. Perring claimed to have "invented" beaver hats, and particularly to have been the first person to introduce the light beaver hat weighing four ounces. He advertised bitterly that since that great day his "copyists" had "sprung up like mushrooms." Nay, these "unprincipled pretenders" had even copied his doorway.

At No. 355 Strand, next to the Lyceum Theatre, that interesting person Deville the phrenologist examined the heads of his generation. Among his satisfied clients was Tom Moore, who paid him a visit on 11 May, 1826, taking with him Sir Francis Burdett. He found no poetry in Moore's head, but a great love of facts and clearness of argument. Moore was not displeased ; no one ever is displeased with a phrenologist, who when he does not confirm self-love usually extends its scope. Professor Fowler once told me that I possess great organizing ability, and would be able to control a vast railway system. I have not yet been able to tidy my desk, but I always think kindly of Professor Fowler.

Moore took other of his friends to Deville, and one party consisted of Lords Lansdowne and Cawdor, and Sydney Smith. On this occasion the phrenologist did not shine ; he told Lord Lansdowne, whom he did not know, that he gave his opinion without deliberation, and Sydney Smith that he was fond of making natural history collections. Smith carried off the affair with "inextinguishable and contagious laughter," in which Moore joined, even to tears.

It should be piously remembered that "Tom Jones," and the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," and the "Pickwick Papers" were all first published in the Strand. Fielding's publisher, Andrew Millar, had succeeded to the premises of Jacob Tonson at No. 141, a house now obliterated by Somerset House. This shop was a hub of literature during several generations, and its door was entered by Swift, Pope, Johnson and Hume, and Thomson. Cadell's partner, Strahan, saw the possibilities of the "Decline and Fall." Gibbon himself relates : "I agreed upon easy terms with Mr. Thomas Cadell, a respectable book-

seller, and Mr. William Strahan, an eminent printer, and they undertook the care and risk of the publication which derived more credit from the name of the shop than from that of the author. So moderate were our hopes that the original impression had been stinted to five hundred, till the number was doubled by the prophetic taste of Mr. Strahan." The first volume was published on 30 April, 1777, and the first edition of a thousand copies had to be immediately supplemented by second and third editions, making 3500 copies in all. The remaining three volumes appeared at intervals; the fourth not till 1788, when its publication was arranged to coincide with Gibbon's fifty-first birthday and a "cheerful literary dinner at Mr. Cadell's house."

The Strand has seen not only the publication of books which the world will not willingly let die, but also the dispersal of the collections of generations of book-lovers. The auction-rooms that are now always spoken of as "Sotheby's," and are in Wellington Street, were once in the Strand itself, at No. 145. The business originated in the middle of the eighteenth century with Samuel Baker, of York Street, Covent Garden, and was soon being carried on under the style of Baker, Leigh & Sotheby. Mr. Baker was called, by courtesy, the father of his tribe, and Dibdin records that at sixty years of age he had every tooth in his head as sound as a roach. He and his partners and successors, George Leigh and Samuel Sotheby, wielded the hammer in the great days of bibliomania, when collectors and connoisseurs, some titled, all wealthy, stood in person round the candle-lit rostrum with snuff-boxes and catalogues.

To savour all that bibliognostic, bibliomaniac, biblio-



polical, and bibliopegistic world you must turn to the pages of Dibdin, where these old gentlemen in beaver hats and spectacles become "book knights" or "book gladiators" in a Homeric struggle for the possession of Caxtons and De Wordes, vellums and variorums, missals and black-letter rarities, and the tooled masterpieces of Lewis and Roger Payne. When Atticus "drops his lance and retires stunned at the repeated blows inflicted on his helmet," we understand that Richard Heber has been outbidden. But again trumpets sound, falchions glitter, and Atticus secures Lot 3228 after "enpurpling the plain with his blood." The battle rages at last by candle-light. "O day of unexampled courage, slaughter, devastation, and phrensy!" Even when the combatants retire it is only to wait the dawn and close rivets up for the ensanguined hour in which the Valdarfer Boccaccio of 1471, the most coveted volume in existence, will change hands. When at last Mr. Evans's hammer falls at £2260, its tap is heard in the libraries of Rome and Venice, and Boccaccio starts from his slumber of five hundred years!

On the whole one likes Dibdin best in his moments of exhaustion, when he is content, for example, to sketch the portrait of "Milk-white Gosset," so named from his passion for vellum. The Reverend Isaac Gosset is said to have been cured of an illness by the mere sight of a vellum Polyglot Bible which was brought to his bedside. He is called by Dibdin the Nestor of the book-auctions, and the Homeric counterpart was aptly chosen for the little hunchbacked scholar who, when he preached at Conduit Street Chapel, was obliged to make himself visible in the pulpit by standing on two hassocks. He abounded in literary information and humour. He died



suddenly in his house in Newman Street, and was mourned by Stephen Weston in lines which adumbrate the bibliomaniacal tumult in which he lived and moved.

When Gosset fell,  
 Leigh rang his knell,  
 And Sotheby 'gan to vapour ;  
 For I've been told,  
 That Folios sold,  
 Indignant for waste-paper.

Dibdin tells, too, how the spoils of battle were carried in many cases to Roger Payne's workshop in St. Martin's Lane, where they entered an atmosphere of squalor and strong ale to emerge in apparel of exquisite design and fragrance. Roger Payne and his brother Thomas drank and quarrelled among the treasures of literature. Thomas did the "forwarding," and Roger wrought on the leather. They used the finest materials with the finest art, and were never the richer. Roger was once convicted of the Falstaffian memorandum, "For Bacon, one halfpenny, for Liquor, one shilling." He went in tatters, and his appearance, says Dibdin, "bespoke either squalid wretchedness or a foolish and fierce indifference to the received opinions of mankind. His hair was unkempt, his visage elongated, his attire wretched, and the interior of his workshop—where, like the Turk, he would 'bear no brother near his throne'—harmonized." At the age of fifty-eight Roger Payne died in Duke's Court, St. Martin's Lane, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. Alcohol had vanquished art, but not until "Bound by Roger Payne" had become a sumptuous whisper in every library and auction-room.

One may easily forget that during seventy years

the Royal Academy brought great painters and art-lovers into the Strand. Its first official quarters were in old Somerset House, and in 1780 new Somerset House became the scene of its exhibitions. Thither came Reynolds, Gainsborough, Turner, and Constable.

In Pyne's "Wine and Walnuts" it is told that Reynolds used to speak of the fine morning effect of the Strand as it burst upon him when he came through Exeter 'Change gate, on his way to the Royal Academy. "The sun, then due east, held the new church <sup>1</sup> in a mass of rich grey, and the morning beam shed its rays with Rubens-like splendour on each side, glancing obliquely on the projections of old Somerset House, and upon the plastered gables of the old-fashioned houses that stood out of the parallel of the street." These gables have long ceased to take the sunrise, but on each side of Somerset House stand six houses which Reynolds must have seen, and whose tiled roofs must have had their part in that morning symphony.

Within the old palace Reynolds's eye met another feast of colour, albeit broken and faded—a vast disarray of pomp in the midst of which Art was lifting her eyes in new ways of worship. The story of the palace is in many books. Built by the Protector Somerset, it had been visited by Elizabeth. It was given by James I to Anne of Denmark, and by Charles II to Queen Catherine. In one of its chambers Inigo Jones had died, in another Cromwell's body had lain in state. The early Quakers would have banished its idols and fripperies and sat silent in its halls, but Fox checked these "forward spirits" because he foresaw "the King's coming in

<sup>1</sup> St. Mary-le-Strand.



GEORGE YARD, STRAND

GEORGE YARD, GIVING ACCESS TO THE ADELPHI, STILL PLEASES THE ARTIST (p. 160)



again." The palace became a nesting-place of Court favourites, and then a barrack.

Dapper artists and critics must have curiously surveyed the ruins about them. Neglected gardens, mutilated statues, and fountains long dried up met the eye. Within the stately old rooms a hundred relics of royalty and grandeur were seen. "In one part," says a writer of the period, "were the vestiges of a throne and canopy of State; in another curtains for the audience-chamber, which had once been crimson velvet, fringed with gold. What remained of the fabric had, except in the deepest folds, faded to olive colour; all the fringe and lace but a few threads and spangles off; the ornaments of the chairs of State demolished; the stools, couches, screens, and fire-dogs broken and scattered about.

"The audience-chamber had been hung in silk, which was in tatters, as were the curtains, gilt leather covers, and painted screens. Some of the sconces, though reversed, were still against the hangings; and one of the brass-gilt chandeliers still depended from the ceiling. . . . The general state of this building—its mouldering walls and decaying furniture, broken casements, falling roof, and the long range of its uninhabited and uninhabitable apartments—presented to the mind in strong, though gloomy, colours a correct picture of those dilapidated castles, the haunts of spectres and residence of magicians and murderers, which have since the period to which I allude made such a figure in romance."

In such surroundings did the eighteenth-century masters—Classicists and Futurists—organize their work. But the palace soon dissolved, and it was in the Somerset House of to-day that the first and greatest of them bade farewell to life and art. The

scene and circumstances of Reynolds's last discourse are familiar, but good to recall. He said, "My age and my infirmities make it probable that this will be the last time I shall have the honour of addressing you from this place. . . . I reflect, not without vanity, that these discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy and in this place should be the name of Michelangelo." There was a pause, and then Burke, grasping the President's hand, repeated Milton's lines:—

The Angel ended; and in Adam's ear  
So charming left his voice, that he awhile  
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear.

It is not surprising that a street that has always linked the London of work to the London of play should have become deeply concerned with art and literature. The nursery of old English water-colour painting was Dr. Monro's house at No. 8 Adelphi Terrace, whither Turner came (crossing the Strand from Maiden Lane) to sketch with Girtin for half a crown and his supper. Enough honour has not been paid to Monro. He tended sick minds in Bedlam, and in his leisure encouraged the sweet sanities of landscape art in the Adelphi. He was not a mere patron of artists, he was their friend and good Samaritan. He tended John Cozens in his last darkened years; he helped De Wint, Varley, and Cristall in various crises; and he buried Hearne and Edridge in Bushey churchyard, where he lies beside them. He was himself an amateur artist, with a passion for sketching in Gainsborough's broad style, and he was so in love with his collected drawings and prints that he had a netting placed in the roof of his carriage to hold a portfolio.



The sketching-room in Adelphi Terrace was provided with desks and candles, and in it a dozen young painters practised in the winter evenings, Monro undertaking to buy their drawings for half a crown apiece and to add an oyster supper.

We think of London as the emporium of Art, forgetting that her streets and suburbs have been its nursery. Girtin dated much of his accomplishment from a study he made of the steps of the old Savoy Palace. The river and Clapham Common gave Turner some of his earliest subjects. Gainsborough and his friend Collins made studies of the docks and nettles along the river at Millbank. Varley and Neale would spend a whole Sunday in the fields about Hoxton and Tottenham. William Hunt and John Linnell resorted to the Kensington Gravel-pits, then open country, and sat down to sketch any mossy walk or cottage and paling that offered them practice. George Barrett advised students to watch the sunsets over Paddington Canal from the bridge at Maida Hill. Paul Sandby, in his eightieth year, might be seen seated at his window in the Uxbridge Road sketching some effect of light and shadow in Hyde Park. Lovely and pleasant in their lives, in death these men are not divided, for one seldom thinks of them singly, and year after year, when the March sun invests the church of St. Mary-le-Strand with a flower-like whiteness, and the crocuses illumine the soil of Lincoln's Inn, we are summoned to an ingathering of that exquisite and unassailable art which so largely began and ended along the Thames shore.

You may still see the Chelsea window to which Turner's chair was drawn in his hour of valediction. The light of the short day was dying along the river of his youth. There Girtin, of whom he always spoke as

"Poor Tom," had painted his "White House." There, or near this spot, he had himself painted his first exhibited picture, the "Moonlight at Millbank." As a man he had lived too long, and as a painter he had long survived the Adelphi brotherhood. He had lived to send his pictures to the Great Exhibition, whose pavilions heliographed to the world the coming of a new age, our own. Who can doubt that he saw its vapour in the river dusk, and caught the murmur of our multitudinous ado! For our England is not Turner's; she stands to be new or to be lost; and Old England—the feudal garden of our fathers, and the unscrambled honeycomb of poet and painter—passed in that December evening, on that Chelsea beach, when the sunset drew the night over the waters, and eternal night over the soul of Turner. It was fitting that he, the greatest, should watch the fading day, his the hand to fire the evening gun.

Not quite of these was Thomas Rowlandson, who was to be seen walking any day between Adam Street and Rudolf Ackermann's print-shop at No. 96 Strand, later at No. 101. Here, close to the Beaufort Buildings where Charles Lillie had sold his "true perfumed lightning," and his rejected letters to the "Tatler," Ackermann published "Dr. Syntax," and Rowlandson found a market for his boisterous caricatures. To Beaufort Buildings—now handsomely sepulchred by the Savoy Hotel—came artists, authors, and connoisseurs at the bidding of the clever, burly, upright, broken-English-speaking German. Mr. Mitchell, the banker, lived in the same buildings, and helped to give the place a festive character. Rowlandson was constantly at his table when he was not travelling Europe to make sketches on commission for the banker's portfolios. "A most facetious, fat gentle-

man," is Henry Angelo's description of Mitchell. "In him centred, or rather round him the Fates piled up, the wealth of a whole family. He was ever the great gathering nucleus to a large fortune. He was good-humoured, and enjoyed life. Many a cheerful day have I, in company with Bannister and Rowlandson, passed at Master Mitchell's . . . listening to the stories of my old friend Peter Pindar, whose wit seemed not to kindle until after midnight, at the period of about his fifth or sixth glass of brandy and water. Rowlandson too, having nearly finished his twelfth glass of punch, and replenished his pipe with choice Oronooko, would chime in." Pyne, to quote him again, introduces Caleb Whitefoord, the witty wine merchant, whose "Cross Readings" so easily amused Dr. Johnson and his friends. Caleb meets Mitchell near the Adelphi and exclaims, "Well, worthy Sir, what more choice bits—more graphic whimsies, to add to the collection at Enfield, hey? Well, how fares it with our friend Rolly?" "Why yes, Mister Caleb Whitefoord, I go collecting on, though I began to think I have enough already, for I have some hundreds of his spirited works; but somehow there is a sort of fascination in these matters, and—heigh—ha—ho—hoo" (gaping), "I never go up—up— Bless the man! why will he live so high? It kills me to climb his stairs," holding his ponderous sides. "I never go up, Mister Caleb, but I find something new, and am tempted to pull my purse-strings. His invention, his humour, his oddity, is exhaustless."

In this atmosphere was carried out the scheme of "The Microcosm of London," consisting of a series of views of London streets, buildings, and interiors, with accompanying letterpress. Pugin did the architecture, and Rowlandson put in the figures. Rowland-

son's industry was prodigious, yet he was no hermit ; he often diced a whole night away, and once he sat at the gaming-table for thirty-six hours. He was uncontrollable in this matter, yet remained the soul of honour. And if his losses were great at night, so was his toil next morning. His rapidity of draughtsman-ship was amazing. It was not boastfully that he would say : " I have played the fool, but "—holding up his pencil—"here is my resource." Nor did his drawing exhaust his production, for he declared that he had etched as much copper as would sheathe a man-of-war.

Another great artist whose name is written in the Strand is Charles Keene. His first drawing for "Punch" was done in his ramshackle studio at the top of a house in the demolished row that ran a little while ago between the churches, screening Holywell Street. From its windows he and his sister watched the funeral procession of the Duke of Wellington. His biographer, Mr. Layard, gives a pleasantly minute description of this "sky-parlour," with its artistic odds and ends, costumes, armour, and a battered old lay figure. In this chaos Keene worked in a pea-jacket, smoking a little Jacobean clay pipe. He was a bundle of whims and contempts, and had small respect for the idle opinions of the world. "Them's my sentiments pretty accurately," he said one day, after quoting these lines of his friend, Percival Leigh, from a very early number of "Punch":—

Mrs. Grundi,  
Gloria Mundi,  
Passes like a dream away.  
You may chatter,  
That's no matter  
Ma'am, I care not what you say.

Keene is one of the little immortals, with his gallery of self-made old gentlemen, barristers, volunteers, artists, waiters, barbers, and 'Arry and 'Arriet. "*Learned Professor (to bookseller)*: 'Have you the "Bacchæ" of Euripides?' 'Arry: "'Ere, 'ave a fill out o' my pouch, Gov'ner!'" Charles Lamb would have relished the old scholar's glassy, uncomprehending stare, and the bookseller's poise of ignorance, which puts him as much beneath the situation as 'Arry's good-heartedness makes him its master. Keene loved to arrest a stare or a gasp, as in his "Punch" drawing "Cheek." A volunteer regiment is about to march out with twenty rounds of blank cartridge. "*Sub-lieutenant (of twenty-four hours' service)*: 'Whereabouts is this Pyrotechnic Display of yours coming off, Colonel?'" It is an awful moment. The few officers standing about are paralysed, the colonel's horse, led by an orderly, alone stirs a limb; in the distance the regiment waits. The colonel glares on the youngster, from whose face the smile is just fading. Keene's backgrounds, his landscapes and distances, his bits of country lane, his gates and park walls, and his beaches and boats are inimitable. The way in which standing wheat is rendered in the drawing of 26 August, 1871, called "Silly Suffolk (?) Pastorals—Reciprocity," is miraculous. And who ever drew a turnip-field, with a pencil, like Keene?

The island block that separated the two Strand churches and hid them from each other became airy nothing ten years ago. The river-ward streets here had already been rebuilt in a neo-Gothic style which suggests their former appearance no more than a void. Still, their names remain, their sites are preserved, and in Norfolk Street a large and coherent scheme of



rebuilding has somehow spared one of the houses which represent the street in which Peter the Great had his first London dwelling.

I have been told that when the old houses in Norfolk Street were pulled down, some twenty years ago, several were found to have been built on piles. In the old days Norfolk Street was virtually a blind alley ; at its lower end there was a semicircular platform or terrace with railings, from which wanderers from the Strand could look down on the boats. Many Londoners easily recall this older street, in which Mrs. Lirriper waged her eight-and-thirty years' warfare with lodgers and servant-girls, and was embittered by the business rivalry of Miss Wozenham, who took in lodgers over the way for less money than herself, yet gave her servants higher wages, besides having the effrontery to advertise her apartments in Bradshaw's Railway Guide.

In those days I think Norfolk Street had much the same aspect as Craven Street, near Charing Cross. Its houses had seen some notable residents. In one of them lived and died Dr. Brocklesby, ever to be remembered as the physician who attended Lord Chatham in the tragical scene in the House of Lords, and comforted the last days of Dr. Johnson. Johnson and Burke could never speak highly enough of Brocklesby. A touching story is told of his death in Norfolk Street. In December, 1797, he determined to visit Mrs. Burke, then a widow, at Beaconsfield. A friend feared that he was too old and weak for the journey, and sought to dissuade him ; but the old man replied : " My good friend, I perfectly understand your hint, and am thankful to you for it ; but where's the difference, whether I die at a friend's house, at an inn, or in a post-chaise ? I hope I am



in every way prepared for such an event, and perhaps it is as well to elude the expectation of it." Leigh Hunt comments: "This was said like a man and a friend. Brocklesby was not one who would cant about giving trouble at such a moment—the screen of those who hate to be troubled; neither would he grudge a friend the melancholy satisfaction of giving him a bed to die in. He better understood the first principles which give light and life to the world, and left jealousy and misgiving to the vulgar." The good doctor went down to Beaconsfield, returned a few days later, and died. He was laid in the churchyard of St. Clement Danes.

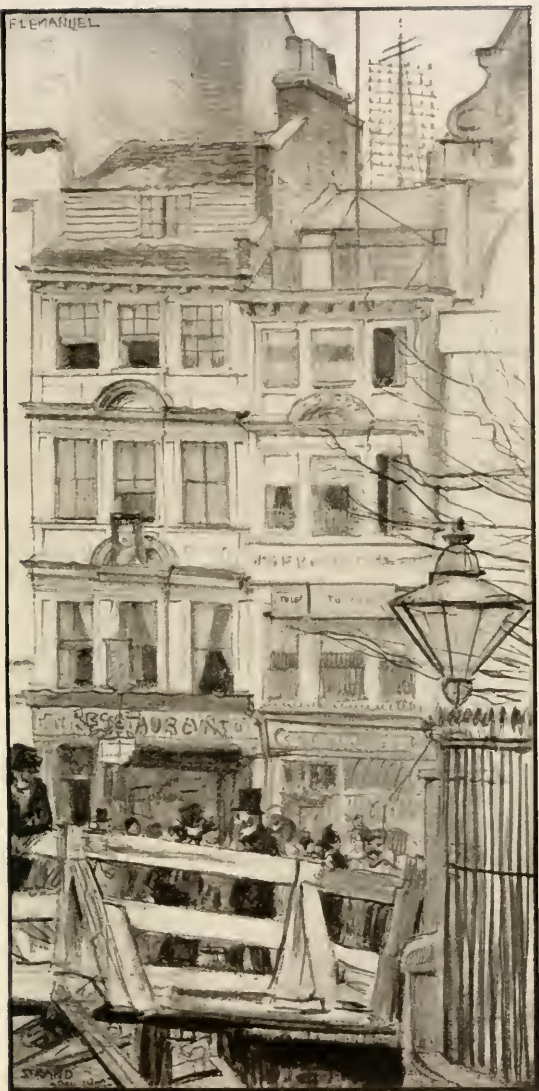
Mowbray House, at the corner of the street, long and memorably associated with the late Mr. W. T. Stead, stands, as I reckon, on the site of the residence of Albany Wallis, who died here in his eighty-seventh year, in 1800. He was a wealthy solicitor. The "Gentleman's Magazine," in an obituary notice, says that his abilities were of a very inferior kind, but that he was so taciturn that the world imagined "more was meant than met the ear." It was Albany Wallis who raised, at the cost of £1000, the monument to Garrick in the Abbey. He had lived for many years in close friendship with the great actor, had been his executor, and had helped to bear his pall at the funeral. But his interest in the monument was explained in various ways of unkindness. It was said that he had paid his addresses to Garrick's widow, and that, being rejected, he raised the Abbey monument out of pique, leaving Mrs. Garrick to be blamed for neglecting such a tribute—an omission which the "Gentleman's," resolved to be impartially disagreeable, said would entail eternal disgrace upon the person from whom such a mark of admiration,

gratitude, and affection was on all hands expected.<sup>1</sup> Not satisfied with this innuendo, the genial obituarist suggested that Wallis was not the man to take any revenge that involved expense, and that his motive might be an ambition to link his name for ever with Garrick's, to "share the triumph and partake the gale" of the actor's renown.

Garrick's name is my reminder that the accepted note of the Strand is the theatre. But the drama and its annals are like the violoncello that Dr. Johnson did not dare play; they tend to exclude all other subjects by their complexity and fascination. In a quarter of a century we have seen great figures pass from the Strand. It must needs be so, for Time has mown down players and theatres together. Five theatres have been uprooted: the Globe, the Opera Comique, the Olympic, the Strand, and the Old Gaiety. There have been compensations, but I boggle at the chaos of memories, from which two visions arise with that acute appeal which justifies a word: Irving's "Jingle" and Mr. Dan Leno. And of Irving's "Jingle," I have nothing to say except that I am as glad to have seen it as to have seen anything the comic stage has offered in latter years.

Mr. Dan Leno did not belong specially to the Strand's footlights—he was seen elsewhere—but I connect him most with the Tivoli Music-hall. Not to have seen Dan Leno, not to have seen him often, is now a misfortune one may be glad to be spared. I doubt whether any man has charmed Londoners so much since Garrick. And I am careless of mixing him up with the masters of "legitimate" drama, because he is certainly to be mixed with them, and

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Garrick had already raised a monument to her husband in Lichfield Cathedral.



### STRAND DEMOLITIONS, 1902

THE ISLAND BLOCK THAT SEPARATED THE TWO STRAND CHURCHES  
AND HID THEM FROM EACH OTHER BECAME AIRY NOTHING TEN YEARS  
AGO (P. 179)



with all masters, in the class of genius. The man who, in any calling, seems to add something to all that visible or comprehended effort can attain has genius. Leno brought something upon the stage that was not in his song, or in his talk, or in any of his nameable qualities, even in his humour. None of these really distinguished him from others. It was the rush of whimsical sympathy from the little man that made him great. Who can forget that dry, pleading, coaxing, arguing voice, hoarse with its eagerness, yet mellow with sheer kindness and sweetness of character?

In cold print Dan Leno's humour is vulgar with the vulgarity of the music-halls, but on Leno's lips all that was consumed as by fire. The sordid things of life—poverty, debt, domestic jars—lost their hurt under his ingenuities and catastrophes of candour. In describing the house he had bought ("Buying a House") he said: "When you look through the side-window the view is obstructed by trees. Well, they have been trees, but they're not now, they've been split. They're planks; in fact, it's really a bill-posting station."

His humour depended on its delivery; it was a lightning gift from man to man; an exquisite, reckless, irresistible fandango of fun round the little foibles of some familiar character—a doctor, a waiter, a shopwalker, a beefeater—yet so loosely tethered to its subject as to be free to indulge in any number of drolleries of speech, verbal contortions, and what not. The unifying quality was the man's gusto. He drowned drollery in drollery, he annihilated thought; he seemed to absorb all the earnestness in the house and use it before our eyes to make us laugh. And there was nothing merely expert in his

rapidity ; the expertness was there, but it was the rapidity of expertness in the temperature of kindness.

This gave Leno his supremacy. Other music-hall singers used the same comic material, but no one approached him in the art of buttonholing an audience, say, rather, in loving it. The tone of sympathy, of privacy, never left his voice. He was forever making a clean breast of it, and beginning again in a new frenzy of confidence or warning. In all this you felt that he was acting with the stream of his character, that he was indeed the kindest and most ebullient of men, and a delicious observer.

A small boy might have invented much of Leno's nonsense, but only a great artist and a good man could have made the heart laugh with it. In his song "The Jap" he said he had been to Japan as a tea-merchant, but the man who sold him plants made a mistake and gave him rhubarb. Finding that he could not sell it, he tried to pass it off as "a kind of new season shou-shou." A boy might have said "shou-shou"; there was no attempt to be more Japanese than the "Jap," to coin a clever word that the audience could not have coined. He just rapped out "shou-shou," and the house crowed like a child. And when a little later he began a preposterous love episode by saying, with his inimitable air of making things clear, "One morning I was watering the shou-shou," every one crowed with gladness.

Leno's jokes did not seem to be fabricated, but to happen, and even so they came fast as a prairie fire. He was always driving on to some insane urgency ahead, or stopping to get himself—and us—out of some imbecile muddle. His understanding with his audience was the essence of his success,



and he knew this so well that he could play with it. What a triumph was his fuss of incredulity when he affected to see in our faces a blankness at his casual mention of a certain Mrs. Kelly. "Good life-a-mighty ! don't look so simple. She's a cousin of Mrs. Nipletts, and her husband keeps the what-not shop at the— Oh, you must know Mrs. Kelly, everybody knows Mrs. Kelly." As Mrs. Kelly's name recurred, not only she, but all her kin and acquaintance, all her twopenny-halfpenny dealings and disputes, seemed to take shape, until—as the repetition in changing keys went on—whole breadths of London rushed into view, all the flickering street-corners on Saturday nights, all the world of crowded doorsteps and open windows, where Mrs. Kelly is Mrs. Kelly. Nothing would do until we had acknowledged a lifelong acquaintance with Mrs. Kelly, and upon this immense confirmation of her existence came overwhelming mirth, having its seat in sheer realization of life. Only Leno could do this.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A WALK THROUGH EVERYMAN'S LONDON

The Abbey and an Adventure—Chateaubriand—The Despoilers—Antiquities as Playthings—Charles Lamb—"Royalest Seed"—King Henry orders his tomb—"They do bury fools there"—"Hic prope Chaucerum"—"Two feet by two"—Sir Isaac Newton—Garrick's Funeral—Byron's Home-coming—Chapel of the Pyx—The National Quarter—The Fire of 1834—The Horse Guards' Parade—Signalling to the Fleet—The York Column—"A Shocking Bad Hat"—Cleopatra's Needle for Waterloo Bridge—A Congress of Wounds—The Evicted Rooks—The King's Palace—Her Grace of Buckinghamshire—The Marble Arch—Hyde Park Corner—The Duke and the Statue

WHO forgets, and who recovers, his first vision of the Abbey towers, grey above the trees, moored as it were in the sea of time, and bathed in the aura of a race? My own is enhanced in recollection by a boyish adventure. It befell that for ten minutes in the dusk of a summer evening I was locked up alone among the royal tombs. I had arrived late, and in the rustic frenzy of my fifteen years. The verger, relenting from the rules, took me up the deeply shadowed nave. Unlocking the iron gates at the south of the Sacrarium he passed me into the heart of the Abbey, telling me that I might walk round to the corresponding north gates where he would meet me in ten minutes. It was magnificent, but sudden, and I was subdued when he

locked the gate and walked away in the gloom. I moved uneasily round the chapels, not fearing, I think, a kingly ghost, but the faint roar of London seemed to have become an inarticulate cosmic murmur and an insufficient assurance of life in this august home of death. Consequently I was peering through the north gate long before my time. The minutes dragged. A rush of apprehension seized me, I climbed the iron gate, ran like a deer down the aisle, and darted through the door as if royal dust were indeed stirring. Bounding into the street, I was aware of my verger musing in the entrance. He said not a word—nor I.

It must have been in a calmer mood, or with stronger nerves, that Chateaubriand, locked accidentally in the Abbey, passed a whole night there. He looked around for a lair, and found it, he tells us, "near the monument of Lord Chatham at the bottom of the gallery of the Chapel of the Knights and that of Henry VII. At the entrance to the steps leading to the aisles, shut in by folding gates, a tomb fixed in the wall, and opposite a marble figure of death with a scythe, furnished me a shelter. A fold in the marble winding-sheet served me as a niche; after the example of Charles V, I habituated myself to my interment."<sup>1</sup>

It appears, then, that I entered Westminster Abbey thirty years ago under a regime that had not begun the enforcement of strict rule and the scrutiny of handbags; the old era of official insouciance had left a chink through which a country boy could be allowed to wander at his will in the mausoleum. This gives me a sense of another, an older, London—the London that changed perhaps on that Sunday afternoon in 1887,

<sup>1</sup> It is not possible to identify the spot from Chateaubriand's description, which seems to be muddled.

when into the whirlpool of Trafalgar Square the Grenadiers marched from St. George's Barracks with ball cartridge, and the Life Guards came pricking up Whitehall with quite a new kind of glitter. A great deal of the picturesque ruination in the Abbey to-day is due less to the attritions of Time than to such indulgence as I had received. Many who formerly came to meditate remained to carve. The Coronation Chair is covered with the initials of these disastrous folk, who often found leisure to add the date of their depredations. Some of them cut their honest names on the State Shield of Edward III. Others, bent more on relics than personal immortality, removed mosaic and jewels and brass plates, or wrenched off the minor images and ornaments from the great tombs. The shrine of Edward the Confessor is now a dull erection of stones ; formerly it blazed with many golden statuettes, each decked with insignia set with rubies, onyx, and pearls. It displayed fifty-five large cameos, and where there was no such encrustation the fabric was aglow with mosaic. Hardly a handbreadth of this splendour remains. The silver head of the effigy of Henry III was stolen centuries ago. "Some Whig, I'll warrant you," suggested Sir Roger de Coverley ; "you ought to lock up your kings better ; they will carry off the body too if you don't take care."

To realize the cynical neglect of the Abbey in the eighteenth century one may turn to John Thomas Smith's "Nollekens and his Times." Nollekens, who had been a pupil of Scheemakers, did much work in the Abbey, and Smith, who was in turn the pupil of Nollekens, was often with him in the building. It was the great monumental period when many a corner of the Abbey resembled a sculptor's studio. Could anything be more grotesquely informing than the following

snatches of dialogue between the artists and caretakers reported by Smith? Nollekens is talking in his uncouth way to Mr. Catling, the verger.

"*Nollekens*: 'Why, Mr. Catling, you seem to be as fond of the Abbey as I am of my models by Michelangelo. My man Finny tells me you was born in it.'

"*Catling*: 'No, not in the Abbey; I was born in the tower on the right hand, just before you enter into the little cloisters.'

"*Nollekens*: 'Oh, I know; there's some steps to go up and a wooden rail to hold by. Now, I wonder you don't lose that silver thing that you carry before the Dean when you are going through the cloisters. Pray, why do you suffer the schoolboys to chalk the stones all over? I have been spelling "pudding," "grease," "lard," "butter," "kitchen-stuff," and I don't know what all. . . . You had better tell Mr. Dean to see that the monuments don't want dusting, and to look after the Westminster boys, and not let them break the ornaments off to play at sconces with in the cloisters.'

"*Gayfere (the Abbey mason)*: 'Ah, Mr. Nollekens, are you here?'

"*Nollekens*: 'Here? Yes; and why do you suffer that Queen Anne's altar to remain here, in a Gothic building? Send it back to Whitehall, where it came from. And why don't you keep a better lookout, and not suffer the fingers of the figures and the noses of busts to be knocked off by them Westminster boys?'

"*Gayfere*: 'Why, what an ungrateful little man you are! Don't it give you a job now and then? Did not Mr. Dolben have a new nose put upon Camden's face the other day at his own expense? I believe I told you that I carried the rods when Fleetcraft measured

the last work at the north tower when the Abbey was finished.'

"*Nollekens*: 'There's the bell tolling. Oh no, it's the quarters. I used to hear them when I was in the Abbey working with my master, Scheemakers. There's a bird flying.'

"*Gayfere*: 'A bird? Ay, you may see a hundred birds; they come in at the broken panes of glass.'

"*Nollekens*: 'What have you done with the old Gothic pulpit?'

"*Catling*: "It has been conveyed to our vestry, the Chapel of St. Blaize, south of Poet's Corner; a very curious part of the Abbey, not often shown—did you ever see it? It's very dark; there is an ancient picture on the east wall of a figure, which can be made out tolerably well after the eye is accustomed to the dimness of the place. Did you ever notice the remaining colours of the curious little figure that was painted on the tomb of Chaucer?'

"*Nollekens*: 'No, that's not at all in my way.'

"'Pray, Mr. Nollekens,' asked Mr. Champneys, 'can you give me the name of the sculptor who executed the basso-relief of Townsend's monument? I have applied to several of my friends among the artists, but I have never been able to obtain it; in my opinion the composition and style of carving are admirable; but I am sorry to find that some evil-minded person has stolen one of the heads.'

"*Nollekens*: 'That's what I say. Dean Horsley should look after the monuments himself. Hang his waxworks!'

All this scarcely bears out Charles Lamb's scepticism about Abbey depredations in his essay on the tombs. He says: "For forty years that I have known the fabric the only well-attested charge of violation



adduced has been a ridiculous dismemberment committed upon the effigy of that amiable spy, Major André." But the mischief had been done, and the danger remained. The instance that Lamb allows is a curious one. Acting under the rules of war, Washington had sentenced André to death. Every possible effort was made by the British to save him, but in vain, and this fine British officer died with serene heroism. The whole British Army went into mourning, and in 1821 André's remains were brought to Westminster Abbey. The monumental group placed over his remains was several times mutilated, and more than once the head of Washington was removed. Two heads taken from the monument were returned from America to the Dean many years ago with the request that they might be replaced. They had been carried off by relic-hunters.

The Abbey is like Shakespeare : all men know it a little ; few know it intimately or can cast up the sum of its greatness. The kingliest of our kings lie there ; those who ruled over " Merry England " and led her soldiers in the field. Many of them were magnificent patrons of the Church, and they gave their bones to its keeping. Henry III, the builder of the Abbey as we now know it, prepared the shrine of Edward the Confessor, which was for ages the magnet of kings, as Chaucer's grave of poets.

In his turn, Henry III, the " king of simple life," as Dante called him, who had himself carried on his head the Holy Blood to Westminster through the streets of London, was entombed by Edward I.

Edward's own remains were placed in a very plain tomb, perhaps in the hope, as Dean Stanley suggests, that it might be possible some day to fulfil that famous " pact " that he made with his son on his deathbed,

that his flesh should be boiled and his bones carried at the head of the English Army until Scotland was subdued. It is certain that at frequent intervals the body of the greatest of the Plantagenets was wrapped in new cere-cloths, as if in view of this dramatic possibility.

In this Chapel of the Confessor, whose floor is "paved with princes," lies Henry the Fifth, Harry of England, the "Hector of his age." It was just before his departure to Agincourt that he gave precise directions for his tomb and the magnificent chantry over it.

It is curious that the king who represents all the strength of sovereignty should have deposited in the Abbey with pious pomp the remains of the king who represents all its sentiment. Whether the body which he laid beside Queen Anne of Bohemia by Henry V was that of the hapless victim of Pontefract Castle was doubted at the time, the mystery being involved in the whole question of the deposed king's fate. But it has long been assumed that the effigies of king and queen do not form a bitter travesty.

One of the strangest and most moving stories of the Abbey is that of Henry VI choosing his grave there, and choosing it in vain. He wished to be near his father, and he came to see the spot with Fleete, the Prior and historian of the Abbey. Lord Cromwell also attended him, and the master-mason was there. Dean Stanley's picture of the scene is unforgettable.

"Henry asked Fleete, with a strange ignorance, the names of the kings amongst whose tombs he stood till he came to his father's grave, where he made his prayer. He then went up into the Chantry, and remained for more than an hour surveying the whole chapel. It was suggested to him that the tomb of

Henry V should be pushed a little on one side and his own placed beside it. With more regal spirit than was usual in him, he replied, 'Nay, let him alone; he lieth like a noble prince. I would not trouble him.'

"Finally, the Abbot proposed that the great Reliquary should be moved from the position which it now occupied close beside the Shrine, so as to leave a vacant space for a new tomb. The devout king anxiously asked whether there was any spot where the relics, thus a second time moved, could be deposited, and was told that they might stand 'at the back side of the altar.' He then 'marked with his foot seven feet,' and turned to the nobles who were with him. 'Lend me your staff,' he said to the Lord Cromwell; 'is it not fitting I should have a place here, where my father and my ancestors lie, near St. Edward?' And then, pointing with a white staff to the spot indicated, said, 'Here, methinketh, is a convenient place'; and again, still more emphatically, and with the peculiar asseveration which, in his pious and simple lips, took the place of the savage oaths of the Plantagenets, 'Forsooth, forsooth, here will we lie! Here is a good place for us.'

"The master-mason of the Abbey, Thirsk by name, took an iron instrument and traced the circuit of the grave on the pavement. Within three days the relics were removed, and the tomb was ordered. The 'marbler' (as we should now say, the statuary) and the coppersmith received forty groats for their instalment, and gave one groat to the workmen, who long remembered the conversation of their masters at supper by this token."

After all, Henry, dying in the Tower, was buried at Chertsey, and then his bones were removed by Richard III to St. George's Chapel at Windsor.

Among royal interments none was more splendid or touching than that of Mary II. Macaulay, who notes that the day was dark and troubled, and that "a few ghastly flakes of snow fell on the black plumes of the funeral car," seems to have missed one little record. A robin which had flown into the Abbey perched repeatedly on the hearse, and was noticed.

George II's burial has been described in his usual vein by Horace Walpole. The deaths of Hanoverian kings and princes evoked but moderate sorrow, and though Walpole does justice to the scene in the Abbey he is soon recounting the fears he had about precedence, and declaring that the anthem was "immeasurably tedious." His picture of the "burlesque Duke of Newcastle" fainting in his stall, "the Archbishop hovering over him with a smelling-bottle," adds a ridiculous touch to the picture.

"By God, I will not be buried in Westminster Abbey!" exclaimed Sir Godfrey Kneller on his death-bed. Asked why, he answered, "They do bury fools there;" and he was laid at Twickenham. This was extravagance; nevertheless, a walk round the Abbey will establish the fact that hundreds of people who have no interest for us to-day are buried with statesmen who made history, and with poets who enlarged the soul of man.

Dean Stanley has pointed out that of the three greatest names in England's roll of intellect, Shakespeare, Bacon, and Newton, only the last is inscribed on an Abbey tomb. Shakespeare has a monument, Bacon nothing. There are no monuments to Keats, Shelley, and Byron. Cowley is honoured there, but not Waller; Beaumont, but not Herrick; Denham and Drayton, but not Marlowe and Suckling. Milton's parodist, John Philips, was given a monument in the

Abbey at a time when Milton's own name was considered as an impossible "pollution of its walls." Some absences have been too glaring to be endured. Robert Burns was given a bust forty years ago ; Scott a bust only seven years ago ; and Coleridge's bust was unveiled by Mr. Lowell in 1885. On the other hand, Matthew Arnold is represented by a bust, though few visitors find it ; here promptitude is matched by modernity, for you may study the cut of the great critic's coat and the shape of his collar and necktie. In the same dark corner which has received Arnold's bust Wordsworth is represented by a feeble and moping statue ; why is not our greatest poet since Milton honoured in Poets' Corner ?

Chaucer's grave was the magnet to poetic dust. His grey marble tomb, erected a century and a half after his death, is still the most beautiful and venerable object in this part of the Abbey. He had but a short journey to take from his bed to his grave, for his last days were spent in a tenement in the Abbey garden, on ground now covered by the Chapel of Henry VII. His last words, said to have been dictated on his death-bed, should always be given in connexion with Chaucer's passing :—

Here is no home, here is but wilderness.  
Forth, pilgrim, forth ! O beast, out of thy stall,  
Look up on high, and thank thy God of all.  
Control thy lust ; and let thy spirit thee lead ;  
And Truth shall thee deliver ; 'tis no dread.

Spenser, Drayton, Tennyson, and Browning lie near the father of English verse. Spenser's first Latin epitaph, long superseded, contained the words :—

Hic prope Chaucerum situs est Spenserius illi  
Proximus ingenio, proximus et tumulo.



This inscription, set up by Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, was replaced in 1778 by an epitaph which described Spenser as "the prince of poets in his tyme." A year or two ago the crowbars fell on little King Street, where the poet of all virtue died on a tavern bed. From this street—the old royal way into the Abbey precincts—he was followed to his grave by his brother poets, who presently threw their elegies and their quills upon his coffin. Of these mourners Francis Beaumont was the next to be laid in Poets' Corner.

Drayton followed, and again an Anne Clifford was the giver of a poet's monument. Ben Jonson usually receives the credit of the epitaph, but Quarles may deserve it. It is good to know that Ben is in the Abbey. Poverty and neglect darkened his latter days. Some premonition that he might be shut out of the noble company seems to have haunted his mind. There is an Abbey legend that points to this. It is said that one day, being rallied by the Dean of Westminster about being buried in Poets' Corner, Jonson remarked: "I am too poor for that, and no one will lay out funeral charges upon me. No, sir, 6 feet long by 2 feet wide is too much for me; 2 feet by 2 will do all I want." "You shall have it," said the Dean. Apocryphal as the story sounds, its essential truth is supported by the fact that in 1849, when Sir Robert Watson's grave was being made, the Clerk of the Works "saw the two leg-bones of Jonson fixed bolt upright in the sand, as though the body had been buried in the upright position; and the skull came rolling down among the sand from a position above the leg-bones, to the bottom of the newly made grave. There was still hair upon it, and it was of a red colour." Unfortunately the grave is not in



Poets' Corner, as Jonson's bust (on the same wall as the monuments of Spenser and Milton) may lead the pilgrim to believe. The slab with the words, "O Rare Ben Jonson," cut upon it is in the north aisle of the nave. The stone has been placed against the wall for its better preservation.

The coming of Dryden in 1700 was a great event in the annals of Poets' Corner. No poet has a simpler and nobler monument. Chaucer's tombstone is said to have been sawn asunder in the making of his grave. At first he had no epitaph, and Pope drew attention to the homelessness of "Dryden's awful dust" in his epitaph for Rowe :—

Beneath a rude and nameless stone he lies,  
To which thy tomb shall guide inquiring eyes.

It is said to have been on this hint that Dryden's patron, Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, erected a bust, which was soon replaced by the present one, a masterpiece of Scheemakers'. Dryden is one of those poets whose enmities needed the "reconciliations" of the Abbey. It is curious, nevertheless, that Shadwell's bust and Dryden's are removed as far from each other as possible, and that their faces are averted from each other's gaze in a way that is rather amusing when noticed on the spot.

Next to Shadwell rests Dryden's far more dangerous critic, Prior, who ridiculed his reign at Will's Coffee-house. Why is Prior so little remembered as a man? He must have been a delightful fellow, or he could not have spent so many evenings with Swift; the *Diary to Stella* is full of Prior. He was liker to Horace than any poet we have bred, though he rather desired Horace's life than lived it. The wish

for the simple life needs no better expression than he gave to it :—

Great Mother, let me once be able  
To have a garden, house, and stable,  
That I may read, and write, and plant,  
Superior to desire or want ;  
And as health fails, and years increase,  
Sit down, think, and die in peace.

Addison had preceded Prior to the Abbey by two years. He was, so to speak, born to be buried in the Abbey. His piety, his learning, his wit, his predilections, and his achievements fitted and entitled him to such honour. And his is a classic Abbey funeral. "On the north side of that Chapel," says Macaulay, "in the vault of the House of Albemarle, the coffin of Addison lies next to the coffin of Montague. Yet a few months ; and the same mourners passed again along the same aisle. The same sad anthem was again chanted. The same vault was again opened ; and the coffin of Craggs was placed close to the coffin of Addison." Macaulay himself now lies close to Addison.

The funeral of Isaac Newton was less remarkable for its pomp than for the fact that among those who gathered round the grave was Voltaire. To Newton was allotted one of the two fine positions on either side of the entrance to the Choir. This position had been refused to various noblemen who had applied for it.

One of the most showy of Abbey burials was Garrick's. It cost £1500. There were thirty-three mourning coaches alone, and each was drawn by six horses. When the extravagance of the funeral was being discussed, and the six horses to each coach

were mentioned by Mrs. Burney, Dr. Johnson snapped out, "Madam, there were no more six horses than six phoenixes." But there were. Johnson himself rode in the nineteenth coach, Burke and Beauclerk were in the preceding coach, and Gibbon was in the twentieth. At intervals men in cloaks rode on horseback, and the coaches were attended by pages. The coffin was covered with crimson velvet. All traffic was stopped for two hours while the immense procession made its way from Adelphi Terrace. Many people sat on the house-tops. In the Abbey, Burke suggested that the statue of Shakespeare seemed to be pointing to Garrick's open grave.

Sheridan was buried near to Garrick and Johnson. His coffin was carried by dukes, earls, and a bishop. It is no wonder, considering the circumstances of his end, that a French newspaper remarked that "France is the place for a man of letters to live in, and England the place for him to die in."

It is curious that the body of Sheridan, for whom Byron had so much liking, and whose character he defended, rested in Great George Street, waiting burial in the Abbey, and that Byron's remains lay there only to be turned from the Abbey doors. Macaulay refers to this accident, and to the feelings of those who saw the long train of coaches turn slowly northwards, "leaving behind it that cemetery which had been consecrated by the dust of so many great poets, but of which the doors were closed against all that remained of Byron." Dean Stanley refused to judge harshly either Byron's claims to an Abbey burial or the convictions of those who refused it. But his own sympathies are clear. "If Byron was turned from the door, many a one as questionable as Byron has been admitted. Close above the monument of the devoted

Granville Sharpe is the monument of the epicurean St. Evremond. Close behind the tablet of the blameless Wharton lies the licentious Congreve." It was on 12 July, 1824, that the strange scene was enacted. Byron had died on 19 April at Missolonghi. Twenty-one days' mourning by the Greeks had followed, and it was not until 2 May that the body was embarked, amid the firing of minute-guns, on the brig "Florida" for England. Even the news of his death did not reach London until 14 May. It is impossible to convey an idea of the impression made when the words ran through England—"Byron is dead." Men's breath was taken away to hear that this man, whose excess of life was manifested alike in his virtues and faults, in his genius and personality, had died in an endeavour to free Greece. In one of his letters Byron had protested that he would never allow his dead body to be brought home like Nelson's in a cask; and, indeed, if the spectacular element in his life had been allowed to rule the manner of his burial, he would not have been laid to his rest like a county magnate in the heart of England. On some lonely Ægean isle, or on some Grecian promontory, dear to poet and historian, Byron's obelisk would have caught the first and last rays of the sun.

But on 1 July the ship "Florida" brought his remains to the Downs. It was known that an application for an Abbey burial would be refused, and it had been decided that Byron should be laid in the family vault at Hucknall Torkard, a mile or two from Newstead Abbey, amid the scenes which had been associated with his boyish passion for Mary Chaworth. It seems probable that his remains were brought to Westminster by the very

route over which, with infinite vivacity of description, he had made Don Juan enter London.

On the 12th Thomas Moore breakfasted with Samuel Rogers. At half-past nine they set off. George Street, as they saw it, has virtually disappeared in recent years. When Moore saw the house and the crowd and the undertaker's men, he was seized with a nervous trembling amounting to illness. The scene lives in his Diary. The procession started, Moore riding in a coach along with four others—Rogers, Campbell, Colonel Stanhope, and a Greek Deputy. As they turned out of George Street he saw a lady crying in a barouche, and said to himself, "Bless her heart, whoever she is." Most of the mourners left the procession at St. Pancras turnpike, and returned to town. It was not until he was crossing the Park with Rogers that Moore felt the full pathos of the day. Here, strangely enough, they met a soldier's funeral, and the bugles were wailing out the air, "I'm -wearin' awa' like snaw wreaths." Had they continued the journey north they would have seen much else to move their feelings. As the cortège wound its way up through Kentish Town it passed a small house, from the windows of which it was watched by the widows of Shelley and Captain Williams, whose husbands' drowned bodies had been burned in Byron's presence on the wild beach at Leghorn. Mrs. Shelley wrote afterwards: "What should I have said to a Cassandra who, three years ago, should have prophesied that Jane and I—Williams and Shelley gone—should watch the funeral procession of Lord Byron up Highgate Hill? All changes of romance or drama lag far behind this."

The contiguity of the Houses of Parliament to the Abbey is one of the impressive things of London



The Abbey, Westminster Hall, St. Stephen's, and the Government offices combine to make a great group of national symbols. Their neighbourliness is, of course, a matter of development rather than design, yet less than eighty years ago there was a danger that this great national congeries would be broken up for ever.

The story is worth retelling. On the night of 16 October, 1834, a man of forty was one of an excited band of passengers on the coach from Brighton to London. Far away on the horizon a red light was pulsing wickedly, and at intervals a bright glow struck the clouds above. At last the passengers' shouts of inquiry were answered. The Houses of Parliament were on fire. In this, as in every other direction, the news had travelled fast. At Dudley it was known within three hours. To the man of forty on the Brighton coach it meant more than to most people. Charles Barry had been born under the Palace of Westminster; and now, as the sky reddened, the thought came to him that he might be chosen to rebuild it—a true presentiment.

An appalling spectacle awaited the travellers. The sky was invaded by smoke and embers, and from every suburb crowds were pouring to the bridges. Three regiments of Guards had turned out. The crowd knew that the home of British liberty, the sanctuary of civil rights, perhaps the Hall of Rufus itself—unrivalled in the world, and dear now, if it never was before, to their hearts—were in the greatest peril. And it had but one thought: could Westminster Hall be saved? At the centre that hope became determined effort. Engines were taken into the interior, ready to pour water into Richard the Second's oaken roof. It was a scene which men



were to remember on their death-beds. An eye-witness says that behind the dreadful pother the grey towers of the Abbey seemed asleep in the moonlight, unconscious of the red tinge that played among her buttresses.

From the sublime to the ridiculous there is never more than a step. Old Dean Ireland, aghast and dusty, was standing with his Keeper of the Records on the roof of the Abbey Chapter House. A gust of wind swept the flames towards them. The Keeper, foreseeing even more dreadful things, implored him to descend and save the inestimable treasures of the church. But John Ireland was not a Very Reverend Dean in an Established Church for nothing. He knew his place, and while the sparks were blowing over Henry the Seventh's Chapel he firmly replied that he could not think of moving anything without permission from the First Lord of the Treasury. Yet had he gone to consult Lord Melbourne he would certainly have been rewarded with an oath.

When the fire was in hand London breathed again. Hall and Abbey stood untouched amid the acres of smoking ruins. The cause of this unparalleled disaster is one of the jests of history, and it was never told with more humour than by Charles Dickens. In an after-dinner speech at Drury Lane Theatre he said :—

“Ages ago a savage mode of keeping accounts on notched sticks was introduced into the Court of Exchequer, and the accounts were kept much as Robinson Crusoe kept his calendar on the desert island, on certain splints of elm-wood called *tallies*.

“In the Reign of George III an inquiry was made by some revolutionary spirit whether—pens, ink, and paper, slates and pencils, being in existence—this obstinate adherence to an obsolete custom ought to be

continued, and whether a change ought not to be effected. All the red tape in the country grew redder at the bare mention of this bold and original conception, and it took till 1826 to get these sticks abolished. In 1834 it was found that there was a considerable accumulation of them ; and the question then arose—what was to be done with such worn-out, rotten old bits of wood ? It came to pass that they were burnt in a stove in the House of Lords. The stove, overgorged with these preposterous sticks, set fire to the panelling ; the panelling set fire to the House of Lords ; the House of Lords set fire to the House of Commons ; the two houses were reduced to ashes ; architects were called in to build others ; and we are now in the second million of the cost thereof ; the national pig is not nearly over the stile yet ; and the little old woman, Britannia, hasn't got home to-night."

The old Palace of Westminster was all but destroyed. St. Stephen's Chapel, where the House of Commons had sat for centuries, was reduced to a few blackened walls. It had been set apart during the reign of Edward VI for the use of the House of Commons, and the last day on which the House sat there was 25 September, 1834. On its site has arisen the fine vestibule named St. Stephen's Hall, the walls of which exactly correspond with those of the old Chapel. The spot which the Speaker's Chair occupied is carefully marked, and also the place where stood the table from which Cromwell removed the mace, and on which Pitt and Burke and Fox laid their papers. Below the floor the beautiful Crypt Chapel still remains as one of the few relics of the old Palace. Privileged babies are baptized at its font, and once in an age a Lord Chancellor is married there.

When the last fire-engine had trotted home, when

King William and Queen Adelaide had driven down in two closed carriages to inspect the debris, and when the Privy Council had solemnly reported that somebody had done something improper, the question of immediate accommodation for Parliament presented itself. At a cost of £30,000 the Lords were sent into the Painted Chamber, the Commons into the damaged House of Lords. The results were different: the Lords were uncomfortable, and decided that Barry was a slow architect; the Commons liked their quarters so well that they were in no hurry to move into Barry's new chamber when it was ready.

Ninety-seven architects had been tempted by the premiums and the opportunity. It was understood that a splendid building, in the Elizabethan or Gothic styles, would be sanctioned. Barry's plan, No. 64, was awarded the first premium. He had spent the available time (six months) in the hardest labour, never allowing himself more than five hours' sleep, and he had made a tour of the town-halls of Belgium before working out his design. His son tells us that his first plan was sketched on the back of a letter in a friend's house, and that this was the germ of all that followed. The plan he submitted was curtailed, and altered in the execution beyond belief, yet out of the welter of schemes and counter-schemes there emerged the perpendicular Gothic conception which the world applauds to-day.

The low site chosen for the building was an obstacle to magnificent effect, all the more so because old Westminster Bridge had a much higher pitch and a taller parapet than its successor. A proposal was made to elevate the new Palace on a great terrace, like that of Somerset House, but it was seen that this would woefully dwarf Westminster Hall and the

Abbey. There was also an idea of removing Parliament to the Green Park or to Trafalgar Square, but the associations of history forbade. In a recent discussion at the Architectural Association it was mentioned that the Duke of Wellington favoured the river-edge site on the characteristic ground that the Houses of Parliament ought not to be accessible on all sides to a mob !

The national region of London, as it may be called, is but "irregularly great," but it homes itself about the Abbey in large and impressive groupings and areas. Within a few minutes one may see, besides the great Westminster buildings, the long line of Government offices, the Banqueting Hall of the Stuarts, the Horse Guards and its Parade, the old Admiralty, the Nelson Monument, old St. James's, the Mall, and the Palace. Parliament Street and Whitehall are resonant with great names and happenings. Milton lodged in Scotland Yard while Latin secretary to Cromwell, and Andrew Marvell succeeded to his office and residence.

Something of the old Cromwellian air of Whitehall lingers in Whitehall Court, behind the Banqueting House of unhappy memory. Here are little fore-court gardens and green painted window-boxes, and pigeons ambling about in the sunshine, and one hears the golden notes of Big Ben. The house in which Sir Robert Peel died looks down on the quiet precinct.

Unless custom has staled the experience one does not stand on the Horse Guards' Parade unmoved. Though it may be empty as the Sahara or flecked with nothing more interesting than a Cabinet Minister and a water-cart the spirit is stirred. The bugles of empire seem to be faintly blowing across this fine level, round



KING STREET, WESTMINSTER

A YEAR OR TWO AGO THE CROWDERS FELL ON LITTLE KING STREET, WHERE THE POET OF ALL VIRTUE DIED  
ON A TAVERN BED (p. 196)





which the buildings of bleached stone or mellow brick rise with significant neatness and power. Yonder is the dragon bomb which Spain gave to the Prince Regent, and away there in a corner, almost lost in its own sombreness of brick and ivy, is the eighteenth-century wall which makes snug the garden of all that messuage, No. 10 Downing Street.

The most interesting building in Whitehall is beyond question the old Admiralty, built in the reign of the first George by Ripley, and described by Walpole as "a most ugly edifice, and deservedly veiled by Mr. Adams's handsome screen." In the room to the left of the entrance-door lay in state the body of Nelson. The Marconi apparatus on the roof is perhaps the most fascinating object in London, for through that delicate web of wires England speaks to her war captains around her coasts and for many hundreds of miles to sea. These Marconi masts have taken the place, on the same roof, of ordinary telegraph wires, which had superseded the hand-worked semaphore by which in Nelson's day a message was sent to the next station in St. George's Fields, and thence from point to point until from the cliffs it sped to the quarter-deck. The rapidity with which messages could be sent down from the Admiralty to Portsmouth through that old chain of semaphore signals was remarkable, and some of the stories of quick communication almost pass belief. From the Admiralty roof a message was transmitted through Chelsea, Putney, Kingston, and thence by Cooper's Hill, Chately Hill, and five other hills to Compton Down, Porstdown Hill, and Southsea Beach, until, finally, it was received on a tower in High Street, Portsmouth. It is said that a message could be thus sent from Whitehall to Portsmouth in less than a minute.

The fellow of the Nelson Column puzzles thousands of visitors to London, and probably as many Londoners. Who is this man, with the lightning-conductor growing out of his head, who looks down on the Horse Guards' Parade and on the Westminster group of public buildings? Whose effigy is thus raised as high as the national hero's? The last question is partly disposed of by the circumstance that this column was erected many years before Nelson's; its scale has therefore only an accidental equality with that of its neighbour. The two columns can be seen in picturesque relation to each other from the west end of Carlton House Terrace.

It was to perpetuate the memory of the Duke of York's services as an Army administrator that the column in Carlton House Terrace was erected, and not—as was irreverently said—that the Duke standing on it might be beyond the reach of his creditors. For bungling the Flanders campaign he was appointed Commander-in-Chief, an office which he held, with one brief suspension, for the rest of his life. On the whole he was a good commander-in-chief, and it cannot be forgotten that it was under his rule at the Horse Guards that England vexed Napoleon in Spain and crushed him at Waterloo. Unfortunately his administration was marred by scandal. In the wary obituary sketch of the Duke which he contributed to the "Gentleman's Magazine," Sir Walter Scott did not spare to condemn the Mrs. Clarke episode. It was recognized, however, that the Duke had been a dupe. And now he stands, 124 feet above censure and Carlton Terrace.

Scott tells a story of the Duke that is more than biographically interesting. At a dinner-party a young officer entered into a dispute with a lieutenant-

colonel upon the point to which military obedience ought to be carried. "If the Commander-in-Chief," said the young officer, "should command me to do a thing which I knew to be civilly illegal, I should not scruple to obey him, and consider myself as relieved from all responsibility by the commands of my military superior." "So would not I," returned the gallant and intelligent lieutenant-colonel. "I should rather prefer the risk of being shot for disobedience by my commanding officer than hanged for transgressing the laws and violating the liberties of the country." The Duke had been listening, and he now gave judgment. "You have answered like yourself," he said, "and the officer would deserve both to be shot and hanged that should not act otherwise. I trust all British officers would be as unwilling to execute an illegal command as I trust the Commander-in-Chief would be incapable of issuing one."

Outside the Army the Duke was a burly royalty about town, and, generally speaking, a good-humoured voluptuary. He haunted the Watier Club, founded by the Regent, where the dinners were exquisite and the gambling ruinous. And he uttered at Newmarket the words, "a shocking bad hat," which for some reason are immortal. His regular companions were men like Albanley, Beau Brummell, Charles Greville (who managed his racing stud), and Sir Thomas Stepney, to name only a few in the circle which he drew round him at the Stable-yard at St. James's Palace. In his later years the Duke of York was not taken seriously as Heir-Apparent, for his life was rendered "bad" by a brave combination of punctuality at the Horse Guards and lateness at the table. Yet he was hopefully planning and building York House (now Stafford House, with a new destiny before it), when dropsy laid him on

his death-bed. From his room in Rutland House, in Arlington Street, which had been lent to him, he could hear the workmen's hammers. His death was sincerely mourned, and the burial at Windsor was carried out at night, with all pomp. At the graveside many distinguished people took severe colds, a consequence which Lord Eldon escaped by standing (with acute reluctance) inside his hat.

In 1831 the Army projected a monument to their lost leader. Carlton House had just been demolished, and Carlton House Terrace had been built in its two ranges. The space between these was to have been filled by a fountain formed of the eight columns of the portico of Carlton House. Before this plan was executed the idea of a grand entrance into St. James's Park from Pall Mall was mooted and preferred. The Carlton House columns went to support the portico of the National Gallery, and the new approach to the Park was selected as the site of the Duke's monument.

It was once intended that Cleopatra's Needle should be erected at the foot of Waterloo Place on the spot where the Crimea monument stands. It may be remembered that when those weighty critics of "Life in London," the Hon. Tom Dashall and Squire Tallo-ho, were admiring the features of Waterloo Place, then known as Regent's Place, the æsthetic squire remarked that there was a vacuum on this spot. His friend agreed, but informed him that the column known as Cleopatra's Needle was "destined to raise its lofty summit in Regent's Place." This idea remained in the air until the fifties, the Needle on its part remaining in the sands of Alexandria, where Thackeray saw it "desecrated by all sorts of abominations." In the interval, the disappointed shareholders of Waterloo Bridge asked in vain to have the

Needle placed on the central arch of the bridge as an attraction to passengers.

The story of Carlton House is the story of a whole period, and it is in many books. But one rather unfamiliar record comes to mind. Here the American Minister of the Waterloo period, Mr. Rush, saw a very remarkable crowd just after the battle—a number of wounded British officers of high distinction basking in the smiles of the Regent. He describes the unusual scene as follows :—

“There were from forty to fifty generals : perhaps as many admirals, with throngs of officers of rank inferior. I remarked upon the number of wounded. Who is that, I asked, pallid but with a countenance so animated ? ‘That’s General Walker,’ I was told, ‘he was pierced with bayonets, leading on the assault at Badajos.’ And he, close by, tall but limping ? ‘Colonel Ponsonby ; he was left for dead at Waterloo ; the cavalry it was thought had trampled upon him.’ Then came one of like port, but deprived of a leg, slowly moving ; and the whisper went, ‘That’s Lord Anglesea.’ A fourth had been wounded at Seringapatam ; a fifth at Talavera ; some had suffered in Egypt ; some in America. There were those who had received scars on the deck with Nelson ; others who had carried them from the days of Howe. One, yes, one had fought at Saratoga. It was so that my inquiries were answered. Each ‘did his duty,’ this was the favourite praise bestowed. The great number of wounded was accounted for by recollecting, that little more than two years had elapsed since the armies and fleets of Britain had been liberated from wars of extraordinary fierceness and duration in all parts of the globe. For, so it is, other nations chiefly fight on or near their own territory ; the English everywhere.”



The palace was taken down in 1826, and next year the rooks which had built in its grounds sought another nesting-place.

The only great and deliberate scheme for building a royal palace in London is that of which Inigo Jones's Banqueting Hall is the monument and the fragment. The story of Buckingham Palace is but serio-comic. It is a curious coincidence that George V's London home stands upon ground that is associated with a "Wake up, England!" gospel preached (somewhat fantastically) by James I. In 1609 James addressed a circular to the Sheriffs, Deputy-Lieutenants, and others, in which he expressed his royal anxiety "to wean his people from idleness and the enormities thereof." He had an idea for making his subjects busy and prosperous, and a very curious idea it was: to plant England with mulberry-trees and establish a native silk industry. Ten thousand mulberry-saplings were to be sent to each county, and the Sheriffs and Deputy-Lieutenants were to see to the rest. James himself took four acres from St. James's Park, walled them in, and planted with mulberry-trees the ground in which Buckingham Palace stands. Mulberry-planting became the fashion. It is said that one of those who fell in with it was William Shakespeare, who planted a mulberry-tree in his garden at Stratford-on-Avon, where it flourished until the middle of the eighteenth century, when it was cut down by Parson Gastrill, to his everlasting local shame. The home silk industry inaugurated by James I did not flourish. In our time, nevertheless, on the spot where His Majesty's silkworms perished, a Queen has in our day ordered her Coronation robes to be made of home-spun silk.

The mulberry-garden became a popular resort,



and the Restoration plays teem with references to its paths and pleasures—both shady. On 10 May, 1654, Evelyn wrote in his diary : “My Lady Gerard treated us at Mulberry Garden, now the only place of refreshment for persons of the best quality to be exceedingly cheated at.” Evelyn explains that since Cromwell had shut up the Spring Garden, the pleasure-seekers had moved to the other end of the Mall. Rather more than fifty years later, when old Buckingham House was built on the spot, Dr. King wrote in his “Art of Cookery” of this “princely palace” that had displaced the forlorn mulberries. Buckingham House was built for John Sheffield, Marquis of Normandy and Duke of Buckinghamshire. It was a handsome house, and the Duke was proud of his view of London seen from his flat, statue-crowned roof, and of his retired garden with its “wilderness full of blackbirds and nightingales.” There were “waterworks” and Latin mottoes, and there was the gleam of the London sunshine on the “canal in the Park.”

It fell out that a Prince and Princess of Wales (afterwards George II and Queen Caroline) wanted a London house, and envied Naboth his vineyard. Naboth was dead, but his widow, the Duchess, was willing to treat. Her notions were severely business-like, and the exact terms of her offer, which have come down to us, indicate that her Grace of Buckinghamshire had the makings of an estate-agent. She wrote : “If Their Royal Highnesses will have everything stand as it does, furniture and pictures, I will have £3,000 per annum ; both run hazard of being spoiled, and the last, to be sure, will all to be new bought when my son is of age. The quantity the rooms take cannot be well furnished under £10,000 ; but if Their High-

nesses will permit the pictures all to be removed, and buy the furniture as it will be valued by different people, the house shall go at £2000. . . . If the Prince or Princess prefer much the buying outright, it will not be parted with under £60,000, as it now stands, and all His Majesty's revenue cannot purchase a place so fit for them, nor for a less sum."

The Hanoverians were poor, and business did not result. The Duchess continued to live in her paradise at the head of the Mall, swelling with pride to remember that she was the illegitimate daughter of James II (a doubtful claim), and therefore the granddaughter of Charles I, whose martyrdom she celebrated every year in her great drawing-room, seated in a chair of state, and "surrounded by her women, all in black and dismal-looking as herself." She had a great mind to be buried at St. Germain's, with her father, but thought better of it, and decided to lie with her husband in Westminster Abbey. She came as near to attending her own funeral as mortal can, for she planned its ceremonial, and insisted on having the canopy brought to her bedside, "even though all the tassels are not finished."

The mansion which George II had refused at £60,000 was picked up by George III in 1762 for less than half that sum, and was settled on Queen Charlotte in place of old Somerset House, which being ruinous was about to disappear in favour of the great Civil Service palace we now know. And thus it was that Royalty came to Buckingham House.

In her Journal, under the year 1792, Fanny Burney gives a brief description of Buckingham House when "Farmer George" and his family were thoroughly settled there. Alighting at the porter's lodge, she

was charmed to be in time to see the King, with his three sons, the Prince of Wales, Duke of York, and Duke of Clarence, standing there after just alighting from their horses, when the people pressed against the iron railings. "It was a pleasant and goodly sight, and I rejoiced in such a detention." She met the Princess Elizabeth in a corridor, and was presently paying her respects to the Queen, who was in her State drawing-room, her head just attired for the assembly, "but her Court dress, as usual, remaining to be put on at St. James's."

Buckingham Palace, as we see it, was built from the designs of the all-building Nash, and large alterations were made for Queen Victoria at her Accession. The insufficiently handsome east front, at last to be renewed, was then built to close in the quadrangle. Many Londoners have forgotten that the Marble Arch, copied by Nash, with modifications, from the Arch of Constantine at Rome, first stood in front of the chief entrance to Buckingham Palace. It is on record that the archway, as first designed, was found to be too small to admit the royal coach; but the mistake was remedied in time. The Marble Arch was to have been surmounted by a colossal bronze group emblematic of Victory, but this was abandoned in favour of an equestrian statue of George IV. The statue was executed by Chantrey at a cost of 9000 guineas; but it never reached the Marble Arch, and is now in Trafalgar Square.

The alterations at Hyde Park Corner within living memory have affected the triumphal arch at the head of Constitution Hill. Formerly consecrated to War and Wellington, it is now decorated by a symbol of Peace. This arch first stood opposite the Hyde Park entrance. In 1846 it was surmounted by the

most conspicuous and ugly equestrian statute ever seen in London, that of the Duke. London had warning of the æsthetic error it was about to commit, for in 1838 trial was made of the statue with a wooden figure of it, and of this erection it was remarked, "Whoever has stuck up this scenic effigy deserves thanks: it demonstrates two things—that the position is a good one, and that a bad statue placed there would be an intolerable eyesore." Nevertheless the bronze statue by Wyatt was erected, and, with all its faults, was loved. Many people bitterly deplored its removal to Aldershot. A few years ago Mr. William Royle told the readers of "Notes and Queries" that he was standing on the top of the Triumphal Arch at Hyde Park Corner when the monument was lowered from it to be removed to Aldershot. The Triumphal Arch then stood immediately opposite Decimus Burton's entrance screen to Hyde Park. The architectural effect produced when the two great portals stood opposite each other may be seen in a picture in the "Illustrated London News" of 30 June, 1860, in which a regiment of Volunteers is marching through both gateways.

Few Londoners, perhaps, remembered that the removal of this statue was mooted even before its erection was completed. This was a sore point with the Duke, who, in 1846, in his room at Apsley House, was looking alternately on the scaffolding of his rising effigy and the newspaper protests against its situation. Wyatt's colossal work had just been hoisted after the interior of the horse had been used as a dining-room by a dozen of the sculptor's congratulatory friends. John Wilson Croker said, "As soon as it was there, everybody but the great Duke seems to have wished it down again." His "everybody" included Queen

Victoria and Prince Albert. The agitation was galling to the Duke, whose feelings can be gauged from these sentences in a letter to Croker : "They must be idiots to suppose that is possible that a man who is working day and night without any object in view, excepting public benefit, will not be sensible of a disgrace inflicted upon him by the Sovereign and Government whom he is serving. The ridicule will be felt, if nothing else is." In the end the Duke's known wishes were respected, and the statue remained to be a mark for jesters and caricaturists down to 1884. Then the opportunity occurred, and was taken, to get rid of an "eyesore." Eyesore or not, the statue had filled the Londoner's eye, and people had liked to show their country cousins that the setting sun cast the shadow of the effigy on Apsley House.

The most famous private mansion in London is not quite what it seems. The stone of Apsley House encases the brick of the mansion which Lord Chancellor Bathurst erected in 1784, after some difficult negotiations with an old woman who defended her interest in an apple-stall erected on this spot. The old brick front is recalled by Thackeray in "Vanity Fair": "And the carriage drove on, taking the road down Piccadilly, where Apsley House and St. George's Hospital wore red jackets still; where there were oil-lamps; where Achilles was not born, nor the Pimlico arch raised." Where, also, the toll-gate still obstructed the entry into London.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE STREET OF THE READY WRITERS

The Lions of Fleet Street—Button's—The Shops of Yesterday—The Hamiltonian System—The First Pillar-box—The Tomb of Richardson—"The Fruits of Experience"—The Age of the Free and Easy—The Bankrupt Silversmith—A Candle-snuffing Expert—A Great Day in Fleet Street—The Herne Hill Philosopher—Peele's Coffee-house and a Tragedy—"Sat cito, si sat bene"—Hardham's Snuff—The Doctor in Gough Square—A Guinea a Thousand Words—"Where's the Book?"—"Rasselas"—The "Cheshire Cheese" Tradition—Wine and Wit—"The Anak of Publishers"—"Childe Harold"—An Angry Poet—Byron's London—The Literary Life.

**Y**EARS ago I remarked to Hewson, "What a wonderful book could be written about Fleet Street!" We had just left Groom's.

"Yes, if you will leave out Dr. Johnson."

"The Hamlet of Fleet Street?"

"No, no, the Polonius. He should be kept behind the arras. A book on Fleet Street minus the Doctor, and Nell Gwynn, and Will Waterproof, and Mrs. Salmon's Waxworks, and Nando's, and Dick's might be worth reading."

"But what is left?"

"Ah, my young friend, stand still. Here! This is Clifford's Passage. Forty years ago this wall was the window of Button's cook-shop. It curved round the corner with lots of window-panes. I used to gaze



in and see the barristers gulping soup and ices. I remember the warm waft from the door, like my grandmother's breath. And they write books about 'Ye Marigold' and the great Lexicographer, confound him!"

"You have the advantage of me. You remember another Fleet Street?"

"Another! You can have no idea how the street has changed. To-day it is all for men in a hurry. The picture and print-shops, the silversmiths', the ironmongers', are gone. I remember the time when kitchen shopping was done in Fleet Street. And my mother bought many a lace and veil at Speare's, next to Gosling & Sharp's Bank—Barclay's now. There is not a grocer or baker left in Fleet Street, but in the fifties you could fill your larder. Perhaps there was no butcher, but there was little Davis, a game and poultry man; his shop was below the 'Cheshire Cheese.' There were cosy confectioners', and a fishmonger named Willows, I think, close to Bride Lane. Waithman's shawl warehouse—it was the Shawl Age—was there too, though Waithman was dead and obelisked. I am talking of the forties, when the newspaper offices were the seasoning, not the dish. I remember that cricket-bats and fishing-rods and bows and arrows were sold in a pretty big shop on the spot where the 'Daily Telegraph' office stands. There was then a milliner's at the corner of Bouverie Street, and at the 'Daily Chronicle' office corner Crutchley sold his maps. I don't recommend Crutchley's maps of London now."

"Any book-shops?"

"A few—Noble's, for one; and there was another I like to remember. It gave me one of those fillips to learning that are so good, though they come to nothing. It was Souter's, two or three doors from

Shoe Lane. Souter's existed mainly to deal in the Hamiltonian system of learning languages. You never heard of that dodge?"

"I think not."

"Well, the idea was a little too simple. Hamilton, who, I believe, had a curious career, printed Greek, Latin, French, and German classics with interlinear translations. You read the French line and found beneath it, in smaller type, the literal English equivalent. And so you went on; no grammar to vex you, no dictionary needed, and no teacher. You began to read Cicero or Racine as if to the manner born. I remember the autumn evening when the idea glued me to Souter's window. I forget how I raised the shillings, but soon afterwards I bought three little books—'Æsop's Fables' in Latin, some French story or other, and a German Gospel of St. John—and carried them home to Brixton. That night I took all knowledge for my province. I remember that my mother reproved my father for laughing at me. In a week I was suffering from polyglot dyspepsia, and I am afraid I got nothing else from the Hamilton system."

"Go on."

"Well, you must imagine Fleet Street without plate-glass. When I was a boy there was hardly a sheet, and if the rows of small-pane windows and old bow-windows could be seen to-day we should treasure them like pictures in the National Gallery. I notice that the new architects are bringing them back. I think I was a lad of fifteen when a great talk was made about a shop-window in Ludgate Hill. It was raised to include the first floor in a manner that was unheard of then, but common now, and ugly always. Another thing I remember is the first London pillar-box. It

was put up at Ludgate Circus, outside Cook's, in 1855. It was a squat affair with a kind of teapot knob on the top of it. Only letters could be posted. A notice told you that newspapers posted there would not be forwarded."

Thus my old friend would talk, recovering his youth from sites and objects. He did not utter all his thoughts, but he was oddly scornful of book topography, hackneyed associations, and the pilgrimage fever. I rose in his esteem when I told him that in twelve years of London life I had not been to the Tower. And he was mightily amused one night when I told him (we were passing St. Bride's Church) how Madame de Staël blundered in her quest of the grave of Samuel Richardson. It is one of James Smith's stories and crops up in his entertaining hotch-potch, "Grimm's Ghost." Madame de Staël, according to the veracious Smith, came to London in a high fever to prostrate herself on the tomb of Richardson. It was to be her first act in London. She had hardly deposited her trunks and bandboxes at the Golden Cross Hotel when she asked the waiter in her overwhelming way if he could direct her to the tomb of Richardson. It was a drizzling November afternoon. The old waiter was nonplussed by the lady's demand, but it flashed on him that it must be Richardson, the tavern-keeper in Covent Garden. Yet no, the man could hardly be dead since he had sold him the sixteenth part of a lottery-ticket in the week before. It must be Richardson, of Richardson & Goodmell, the big lottery agents in Cornhill, who had drawn the great blank.

Away in a hackney-coach went the great lady to Cornhill, and pushed into the office, where a clerk was spreading eighths and sixteenths of lottery-tickets

before a couple of servant-girls. Seeing a managerial person, she asked imperiously to be directed to the tomb of Richardson.

"The tomb of Richardson, madam? Bless me! he's just off to Clapham Rise in Butler's coach. What Richardson do you mean?"

"The *divine* Richardson."

"Divine! Oh, he's a divine? Well, I don't know; you had better ask the bookseller over the way."

Here, on explaining that she sought the grave of the author of "*Clarissa*," she was directed to St. Bride's Church in Fleet Street. Back through Cheapside and Ludgate Hill her coach drove like a fire-engine to Fleet Street, where she called the sexton from his glass of toddy. He took his lantern into the nave, where he rolled up certain matting on the floor and at last disclosed, underneath it, a slab nearly as large as a billiard-table. Down went madam on her knees, gurgling *Je t'adore* in the dust that almost hid from her eyes the tomb of Richardson.

I am sure, from his never quoting it, that my old friend had not read a book about Fleet Street which actually did leave out Dr. Johnson—all but his name. Doubtless many a book-hunter has passed it over, seeing in its title, "*The Fruits of Experience*," a suggestion of sermons or early Victorian piety. Its only begetter, Mr. Joseph Brasbridge, was a silver-smith at No. 98 Fleet Street, two or three doors east of St. Bride's Avenue. He wrote his singular book in the cottage at Herne Hill, to which he retired after a business career that was marred by an early bankruptcy, brought about by his festive and social weaknesses.

As a picture of shopkeeping life in the early years of the nineteenth century, and of the social recreations of City tradesmen, Brasbridge's book has singular

value, though I will not say, with the "Gentleman's Magazine" of 1824, that it is better calculated to benefit our species than all the romances of Scott. It is embellished with portraits of its author and of his friend and generous helper, Mr. John Pridden, the Fleet Street bookseller. Dr. Johnson had still eight years to live in Bolt Court when young Mr. Brasbridge lost his first wife. After this calamity he turned to dissipation, acting on his friend Charles Bannister's reply to a person, who said, "You will ruin your constitution by sitting up at nights." "Oh," said the actor, "you do not know the nature of my constitution; I sit up at night to watch it and keep it in repair whilst you are sleeping carelessly in bed." It was the age of the "free and easy," the prize-ring, and the dog-cart. Brasbridge confesses: "I divided my time between the tavern club, the card-party, the hunt, the fight, and left my shop to be looked after by others whilst I decided on the respective merits of Humphries and Mendoza, Johnson and Big Ben."

At the Highflyer Club, held at the Turf Coffee-house, the young silversmith met such choice spirits as the actor Whitfield, "a kind and social soul"; Mr. Colburn of the Treasury, "whose every look inspired cheerfulness and good humour"; Bob Tetherington, "as merry a fellow as ever sat in a chair"; and Mr. Owen, the confectioner, "a gentleman of considerable accomplishment and talent."

Nothing better illustrates the changes which railways and suburbs have wrought on Fleet Street than the number of snug gatherings which Joseph the silversmith found near his door. Between Cheapside and the Strand he had need to walk only a few yards from one circle of vastly agreeable citizens to another. At the Crown and Rolls Tavern in



Chancery Lane, where card-parties were the order of the evening, he was pleased to hob-and-nob with Mr. Richard Ramsbottom, the eminent brewer and distiller, who "had more of the *suaviter in modo* than any man I have met with." This statement seems to beggar praise rather early in the book, but to turn over Brasbridge's pages is to realize that language could not cope with all the varieties of Fleet Street affability.

In St. Paul's Churchyard our silversmith was richly at home at the "Free and Easy under the Rose," held at the "Queen's Arms." This had been one of Johnson's haunts, but now—relieved of that awful presence—it was the nightly haven of Mr. Hawkins, the highly respectable spatterdash-maker of Chancery Lane; Mr. Draper, the bookseller; Mr. Clutterbuck, the amiable mercer; and also of Mr. Darwin, churchwarden of St. Mildred's, and Mr. Figgins, the wax-chandler, of Poultry, who were so inseparable that Mr. Brasbridge, in an abandon of wit, nicknamed them "Liver and Gizzard," by which names they were most cheerfully known in the club-room ever after.

But the junto of juntos was that which met at the Globe Tavern in Fleet Street. It stood on the ground now overshadowed by the offices of the "Daily Telegraph." There, under the chandeliers of the coffee-room, or in a snug box in the bar, sat the silversmith who made spoons for Archbishop Moore and forks for His Grace of Argyll.

"I often spent my evenings," he tells us, "at the Globe Tavern in Fleet Street. Mr. P. the surgeon was regular in his attendance there, and as he lived on the opposite side of the water, and Blackfriars Bridge was not then erected, he continually had to



take a boat, very late at night, at the certain expense of three or four shillings, and the risk of his life into the bargain. When the bridge was built, however, he grumbled at having to pay a penny for crossing it, though he saved both his silver and his person by the exchange of the boat for the bridge. Among the company at the 'Globe' was Archibald Hamilton, the printer, with a mind fit for a Lord Chancellor; also Mr. Thomas Carnan, the bookseller, who brought an action against the Stationers' Company for the privilege of printing almanacs; Dunstall, the comedian, famous for his song in 'Love in a Village,' and as delightful a companion in a private room as he was amusing on the stage. Also the veteran Macklin, who, when the company were disputing on the mode of spelling the name Shakespeare, was referred to by Billy Upton, a good-tempered fellow, with a remarkably gruff voice, the loudest tones of which he put forth as he observed, 'There is a gentleman present who can set us to rights!' then, turning to Macklin, he said, 'Pray, sir, is it *Shakespeare* or *Shaksper*?' 'Sir,' said Macklin, 'I never give any reply to a thunderbolt.' Another of the frequenters of the Globe Tavern was Akerman, the keeper of Newgate, a humane and social man, and one of those careful personages who always thought it most prudent not to venture home till daylight. Mr. William Woodfall, the reporter of the parliamentary debates, was also frequently with us."

It is not, perhaps, surprising that of the three hundred pages of the "Fruits of Experience" only the first eighty-six are required to introduce the author's bankruptcy. After giving up every farthing Mr. Brasbridge found himself in debt to the amount of £200 and in enmity with various creditors and assignees.

His lease fell into the hands of another silversmith, and with it not a little of his custom. But a large measure of help and esteem was left to the amateur *viveur*, and a signal act of kindness was done him by Mr. John Pridden, the bookseller, who gave up his shop to enable Brasbridge to carry on business next door to his old premises, now in the hands of a rival. Happily, the bankrupt's enemies were not those of his own household. A good second wife and a charming daughter stood by him, and endured with patience his rhetoric of disappointment. What this was like appears in this daughter's excuse for not accompanying her father on one occasion up the river to Chelsea. "I knew," she said to her mother, "that we should have father all the way recounting 'how his cart had broken down, and his little barque had struck upon the rocks of Scylla,' and therefore I begged leave to decline the voyage."

Mr. Brasbridge's observations, rather than his own doings, give interest to his book. He mentions that Mr. John Threlfall, of Fleet Street, whose daughter married Dr. Abernethy, was so athletic that he could leap over the New River. The lighting of eighteenth-century taverns by candles must have presented difficulties, but Brasbridge mentions that Mr. Kenton, the landlord of the Crown and Magpie Tavern in Whitechapel, understood the problem. He had a peculiar facility in snuffing candles, and kept two constantly burning at his side. Having lighted all the candles in the tavern together, he knew by watching these when to run round the rooms snuffing all the rest.

It appears that the art of advertisement writing, now so well understood in Fleet Street, was not unborn. Brasbridge's own advertisements in the

"St. James's Chronicle" were written for him by that "elegant writer and admired preacher," the Reverend Dr. Cosens; and Mr. Henry Baldwin, the proprietor of the paper ("my friend Harry") usually placed them near the poetry corner, where they attracted the notice of beneficed clergy, and brought them as good customers to 98 Fleet Street.

Brasbridge's pages have only a slight Johnsonian interest. Mrs. Piozzi would put her head into his shop on her way to Bolt Court. She particularly admired a stock of papier-mâché tea-trays, then newly invented by Mr. Clay of Covent Garden. They were adorned with Etruscan figures. Clay made a fortune of £80,000 out of these trays, some of which were painted by well-known artists and Royal Academicians.

Having cured his own extravagances, Mr. Brasbridge was human enough to chastise those of his age. He says that in his later years malt liquors had disappeared from the dinner-table in favour of claret at five shillings a bottle. Next to foreign wines he reprobates foreign music: "I am of the old school, and even at this moment the pure English accents of Charles Bannister, in his excellent song, 'Merry is the hall where beards wag all,' vibrate on my ear, and gladden my heart with many a recollected scene of harmless festivity. I will defy any Italian opera to produce on the town that real feeling of delight with which 'Love in a Village' was received on its first appearance, or any Italian signor to bring out shakes and quavers equal to the unlaboured graces of John Beard, in his song of 'Why, neighbour, ne'er blush for a trifle like this.'"

In the end, bereaved of his children, but blest with a competence, and retaining many friends, Joseph

Brasbridge retired to his cottage at Herne Hill, where he drank beer at table, played cribbage with his old wife in the evenings, and went to bed at ten on a pipe and a single glass of grog. In the morning he watched his rich neighbours roll past to the City in their carriages. Now and then he went up in the stage-coach, talking with his rich friend, Mr. Blades, of Ludgate Hill, to whom he confessed that he was overawed at Herne Hill by so many rich neighbours. "You show the awe you stand in by laughing at us," was the thrusting reply.

Peele's Coffee-house does not figure in Brasbridge's list of Fleet Street nooks; its literary atmosphere was probably too dense for him. Peele's is still represented by the tavern at the foot of Fetter Lane. Here law and literature met to read the news. The place dated from the days of George I, and was famous for its files of newspapers, the best outside the British Museum. Among those who searched them were the Duke of Wellington, Lord Macaulay, Dickens, William Cobbett, and Douglas Jerrold. The collection included files of the "London Gazette" (from 1759), "The Times" (from 1780), and the "Morning Herald," "Morning Chronicle," and "Morning Advertiser." When newspapers became cheap Peele's was of less account as a news-room. A writer in "Notes and Queries" desired to know what became of the collection. I can account for a good many copies of Peele's set of the "Gentleman's Magazine"; these are now in my possession and in an advanced state of disjunction.

Establishments of the kind have survived to recent years; there was a news-room half-way down Fleet Street, on the north side, twenty years ago, affording a view of a wonderful amateur roof-garden on the

other side of the street ; another for country and colonial newspapers in New Oxford Street ; and in the chess-room of *old* Simpson's (closed in 1903 to make way for the new restaurant) there was a collection of bound magazines of the good old sort.

A tragic death occurred at Peele's on 15 June, 1848. Thomas Steele, known as "Honest Tom Steele," had thrown himself into the Thames from Waterloo Bridge. He was the trusted friend and political aide-de-camp of O'Connell, by whom he was appointed "Head Pacificator" of Ireland, in spite of his hot and quixotic temperament. When O'Connell's brother was asked, "Why did Dan make a semi-lunatic his head pacificator?" he answered, "Why, indeed! Pray, who the devil else would take such a position?" Steele was a Protestant, but his devotion to O'Connell was such that he kept an altar in his house against his visits. He once fought a duel on his behalf. He wore out his health and fortune in the cause of the repeal of the Union ; but after O'Connell's death he was unable to "pacificate" his own heart and the world about him, and the evil day came when he betook himself to the Bridge of Sighs. The Thames waters did not quite drown him, but he died at Peele's Coffee-house, loved and lamented by men of all shades of opinion.

Outside Peele's an interesting scramble occurred on a day in 1766. A sedan-chair met a crowd at the corner ; there was a scuffle as to who should turn up Fetter Lane first ; the sedan was upset ; and two personable youths were tumbled in the roadway. One was William Scott, afterwards Lord Eldon, the other John Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell. William had come up to London from Newcastle to meet his brother, who was to induct him at Oxford. The coach



that carried him up bore the motto, *Sat cito, si sat bene* (Soon enough, if but well enough). Lord Eldon long afterward recalled these words, which had been graven on his memory by an incident at the inn at Tuxford. A Quaker in the coach called a chambermaid to the door and gave her sixpence, explaining that he forgot to give it to her when he was there two years before. Amazed by this precision, young Scott had the shrewd impudence to say, "Friend, have you seen the motto on this coach?" "No." "Then look at it; for I think giving her only sixpence now is neither *sat cito* nor *sat bene*." When the sedan-chair upset in Fleet Street, Scott made his first application of his newly acquired wisdom. "This, thought I, is more than *sat cito*, and it certainly is not *sat bene*." And he adds: "In all that I have had to do, in future life, professional and judicial, I have always felt the effect of this early admonition on the panels of the vehicle which conveyed me from school." Old Fetter Lane, as Eldon knew it in 1766, and Coleridge fifty years later, and Samuel Butler in our own time (he was "especially prone to get ideas" there), has lost a certain Praise-God-Barebones atmosphere of schism and conventicle, though the little Moravian church survives. Gone is the old White Horse coaching inn and its neighbour houses, a beautiful seventeenth century group, and the ghostly little house on the east side, near Fleet Street, which pretended to have been a home of John Dryden.

Among old Fleet Street shops none is more famous than Hardham's snuff-shop. It was No. 106, close to Ludgate Circus, and here was sold the snuff whose merits Garrick puffed on the stage at Drury Lane. This was known as "No. 37." For many years Hardham counted the "pit" for Garrick, and by his punctuality



and carefulness won the great man's friendship. So one story runs; but there are others. Foote is also named as the author of the puff. Another Highlander stood outside Micklan's snuff-shop at No. 12 Fleet Street. It was damaged one night by a young roysterer, who was sued by Mr. Micklan for thirteen guineas in compensation. This, he said, was a moderate demand, because without the Highlander he would not have done more than half his business, and his takings had increased by thirty shillings a day since he installed the figure. To-day there is no Highlander on Fleet Street, and this great race is dying out. The father of London's wooden Highlanders was placed outside Wishart's snuff-shop at the north-east corner of the Haymarket on the day of the birth of Charles Edward Stuart in 1720. At a later period Wishart's was removed to No. 42, over the way, where it flourished under the sign of "The Highlander, Thistle, and Crown." Wishart's is now in Panton Street. David Wishart not only initiated this sign, but he manufactured wooden Highlanders for other tradesmen. The Wishart Highlander, still depicted on the firm's card, does not wear kilts, but doublet and trews, and he carries the Highland targe. It is said, but probably with little foundation, that these Highlander figures were a token that the houses they adorned sympathized with the Jacobite party.

The sign of the Highlander spread quickly through the London snuff-shops, and nowhere was more honoured than at Hardham's. According to the author of "Real Life in London," this snuff-seller's fame was established in the Haymarket by Samuel Foote, who, in one of his most popular characters at the Little Theatre, offered a pinch of snuff, and to the question where he obtained it replied, "Why at Hard-

ham's, to be sure." Hardham died in 1772, and left a fortune exceeding £20,000.

I am told that the true reason for the mortality among wooden Highlanders is to be found in the cost of their upkeep. The price of a new figure is very considerable. It must be carved out of a single piece of wood. To repaint a Highlander well and correctly is the work of a skilled artist, and would cost about £20. When this expenditure has been necessary, many a tobacconist has considered that he could lay out the money to better if less picturesque advantage.

Dr. Johnson's memory, *pace* my old friend, has entered into the air of Fleet Street; we smell him in the dark. And London has lately shown that she is not tired of his domination of her "highway of letters." His statue now looks down the street, and his house has become a secure shrine. Could the doctor return to its glimpses he would be staggered by the "fury of innovation" which has now removed Temple Bar, as in his own day it removed Tyburn. Yet his eye, roaming down the old long vista, would soon be dim with recognition: the Middle Temple Gateway, the old curve and gradient, some of the houses, nearly all the courts and alleys, and the farrago of roofs lifting the eye to the Dome and Cross, would assure him of his "daily walks and ancient neighbourhood."

It is by one of the happiest of fates that the house in which Johnson compiled his Dictionary, wrote his "Rambler" essays, and dreamed and wrote "Rasselas," should stand to-day in the literary maelstrom of London. This sturdy old building, which was in danger of demolition some years ago, is now to be filled with relics, and with echoes of Johnson's fame. It is more than his workshop; it is the empty



THE OLD WHITE HORSE INN, FETTER LANE

GONE IS THE OLD WHITE HORSE COACHING INN AND ITS NEIGHBOUR HOUSES.  
A BEAUTIFUL SEVENTEENTH CENTURY GROUP (P. 230)



nest of his vexed home life, and the tomb of his greatest devotion. One cannot enter it without recalling the stately, pragmatistical lady who "desired the praise of neatness in her dress and furniture, as many ladies do, till they become troublesome to their best friends, slaves to their own besoms, and only sigh for the hour of sweeping their husbands out of the house as dirt and lumber." Mrs. Piozzi asked Johnson whether he ever disputed with his wife. He answered, "Perpetually." And did he ever huff his wife? "So often that at last she called to me, and said, 'Nay, hold, Mr. Johnson, and do not make a farce of thanking God for a dinner which in a few minutes you will protest is not eatable!'" But when Tettie died, and he had laid her in Bromley Church, Johnson put up a fervent prayer that the wife who had ruffled him for forty years might be permitted to influence him in his dreams.

Although he wrote his "Ramblers" here, there, and everywhere, many of them were written in the Gough Square house. Their success was not great. Johnson received four guineas a week for two essays—a rate of payment which works out at about a guinea the thousand words. The sales, at twopence a number, did not reach five hundred copies a day; but Mrs. Johnson, when she read them, was less inclined to regard her lord as lumber. "I thought very well of you before," she said, "but I did not imagine you could have written anything equal to this." Nor did he lack self-approval. He said to a friend, "My other works are wine and water, but my 'Rambler' is pure wine."

Another literary undertaking and another great sorrow marked Johnson's residence in Gough Square. As early as 1744 he had projected an annotated edition of Shakespeare. Now, in 1756, well rid of his Dic-

tionary, he decided to resume this task, and he therefore issued his "Proposals" with all circumstance. He announced, as it were with tucked wrist-bands, that the edition would be ready by the Christmas of the following year. It was not completed in less than nine years. Boswell thinks that it was Churchill's satire that at last spurred the unwilling horse to his journey's end. On the whole it was calculated to do so :—

He for subscribers bates his hook,  
And takes your cash; but where's the book?

Johnson's last year in Gough Square was clouded by the death of his mother, at the age of ninety. In the "Idler" (No. 41), which he had begun to issue as a weekly paper, he referred to this event in those words of sombre beauty, beginning : "The last year, the last day, must come. It has come and is past. The life which made my own life pleasant is at an end, and the gates of death are shut upon my prospects." It was not literally so. Johnson lived for another quarter of a century, and grew in Chamship and wisdom. And, indeed, this bereavement immediately set him to write "Rasselas," if only to relieve his heart and to pay his mother's funeral expenses.

It is constantly stated that "Rasselas" was written in Staple Inn. But that honour belongs to Fleet Street. On 23 March, 1759, Johnson wrote to his step-daughter, Miss Lucy Porter, "I have this day moved my things and you are now to direct to me at Staple Inn, London. . . . I am going to publish a little story-book which I will send you when it is out." We know that "Rasselas" was published "in March or April" of this year 1759. If it was published in



March there is an end to doubt, because after the date of Johnson's entry into Staple Inn (23 March), there remained only eight days in this month for the completion of the story by himself and its issue by the publishers—an impossibility that is not seriously diminished if we grant that publication might have taken place at the end of April. For this is to allow only five weeks, at the most, for the completion of the story by Johnson, his negotiations with the three booksellers who joined to buy it, and the printing and production of the book. That this unanimous haste was used is incredible. We know, by Johnson's statement to Sir Joshua Reynolds, that "Rasselas" was written in the evenings of one week, and that it went to press in portions as it was written. Those topographers, therefore, who suggest that "parts" of "Rasselas" were written in Staple Inn are asserting that Johnson wrote his story in the six evenings of the week in which he removed from Gough Square (after ten years' residence) to his chambers in Staple Inn; wrote, that is to say, some of its chapters in the turmoil of his departure from Fleet Street and the rest in the turmoil of his arrival in Holborn. That is incredible. And Johnson's words to Lucy Potter, "I am going to publish," etc., indicate that the story was already written. It is not unimportant to establish the fact that "Rasselas" was written in this old red-brick house, in the pocket of silence which is Gough Square. There from night to night the pilgrimage progressed; there Imlac grew eloquent and Pequah timid; the Pyramids were measured, and the Astronomer rescued from the mists of a distraught imagination; and there, it may be, when the midnight stroke of St. Paul's put its melancholy accent on a theme as old as man and elusive as his breath, Johnson penned that quiet

"Conclusion in which nothing is concluded," save only that "they deliberated a while what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abissinia."

The claims of the Cheshire Cheese Tavern to be venerated as a haunt of Dr. Johnson are often advanced and questioned. I know of only two sources for the tradition, and they are both weak: Cyrus Redding's "Fifty Years' Recollections," published in 1858, and Cyrus Jay's reminiscences, published in 1868. All the evidence comes from the two Cyruses. Cyrus Jay's book, "The Law: What I Have Seen, What I Have Heard, and What I Have Known," was published in 1867. In it he writes: "I may here mention that when I first visited the house I used to meet several very old gentlemen who remembered Dr. Johnson nightly at the 'Cheshire Cheese'; and they have told me, what is not generally known, that the Doctor, whilst living in the Temple, always went to the 'Mitre' or the Essex Head; but when he removed to Gough Square and Bolt Court he was a constant visitor to the 'Cheshire Cheese,' because nothing but a hurricane would have induced him to cross Fleet Street."

It is curious that Cyrus Jay should write (in 1867) that Johnson's connection with the "Cheshire Cheese" "is not generally known," for nine years earlier, in 1858, the other Cyrus—Redding—had written: "I often dined at the 'Mitre' and the 'Cheshire Cheese.' Johnson and his friends, I was informed, used to do the same, and I was told I should see individuals who had met them there; and this I found to be correct." So the Johnsonian tradition was fairly "generally known" in 1857. However, it is very similarly recorded by the two Cyruses. But Jay ought to have demurred to his ancient friends' statement that

Johnson went to the "Cheshire Cheese" "because nothing but a hurricane would have induced him to cross Fleet Street." A hurricane, by the way, would rather have kept him on his own side of it; and if the word be only a metaphor, we know as a fact that Johnson was for ever crossing Fleet Street long after he went to live in Gough Square and Bolt Court. He lived in Gough Square from 1748 to 1758; then he left Fleet Street, to return to it in 1765, never to leave it again, except to travel, until his death in 1784. Not once is the "Cheshire Cheese" mentioned by Boswell, who does, however, record many visits to the "Mitre," to reach which tavern Johnson had to cross Fleet Street—hurricane or no hurricane. The old gentlemen had better not have given a reason for their story.

Tennyson was not the first poet who quaffed wine in Fleet Street and felt the better for it. In the innumerable references to the Devil Tavern I find much about Ben Jonson, and the Apollo room, and Ben's "Leges Conviviales" in gold letters over the chimney-piece, but the richest Jonsonian tribute to the wine here is omitted. It is found in a manuscript preserved at Dulwich College, in which Ben carefully notes the occasions when his Muse "smote her life into the liquor," and one or two when she did not. Says he :—

"*Mem.* I laid the plot of my 'Volpone' and wrote most of it after a present of ten dozen of Palm Sack, from my very good Lord T——; that play, I am positive, will last to posterity, and be acted when I and Envoy be friends, with applause.

"*Mem.* The first speech in my Catiline, spoken by Scylla's ghost, was writ *after I parted with my friends at the Devil Tavern*; I had drunk well that night and had brave notions. There is one scene in that play

which I think is flat. *I resolve to drink no more water with my wine.*

"*Mem.* Upon the 20th of May the King (Heaven reward him) sent me a hundred pounds. *At that time I went oftentimes to the Devil*; and before I spent forty of it, wrote my 'Alchemist.'

"*Mem.* My Lord B—— took me with him into the country; there was great plenty of excellent *Canary*. A new character offered itself to me here; upon which I wrote my 'Silent Woman'; my lord was highly delighted; and upon my reading the first act to him, made me a noble present, ordering at the same time a good portion of the wine to be sent with me to London. It lasted me until my work was finished.

"*Mem.* 'The Divill is no Asse,' the 'Tale of a Tub,' and some other comedies which did not succeed, by me in the winter honest Ralph died; *when I and my boys drank bad wine at the Devil.*"

A third poet who loved good wine sent his poetry to Fleet Street to be published. Keats's friends, Taylor and Hessey, had their office at No. 93, and thither, piece by piece, went the manuscript and corrections of "Endymion."

But the most splendid poetic event, and the most forgotten, in Fleet Street's annals occurred a hundred years ago. On 1 March, 1812, "Childe Harold" was published at 32 Fleet Street. Thither John Murray the First had come from the Navy to publish books. If he could have had his way he would have set up bookselling in partnership with another son of Neptune, William Falconer of "Shipwreck" fame. As it was, in November, 1768, he sent out his manifestos and invoices adorned with a ship in full sail. The full sail was a little premature, for he had often to reef his canvas.

Murray was the link between two ages of literature and two phases of Fleet Street. He knew Johnson and his son published for Byron. One December day in 1784 he stood bareheaded to see Johnson's funeral go by. His simple and solemn record gives one the "historic shudder." "Poor Dr. Johnson's remains passed my door for interment this afternoon. They were accompanied by thirteen mourning-coaches with four horses each; and after these a cavalcade of the carriages of his friends. He was about to be buried in Westminster Abbey."

John Murray the Second, the "Anak of Publishers," was established at 32 Fleet Street, with its side-door in Falcon Court, in 1794. Here he entered into relations with Constable and Sir Walter Scott, and here he forged that bomb for the Whigs, the "Quarterly Review." The pavement of Falcon Court has been trodden by Sir Walter. One day in 1809 David Wilkie, dining at Murray's, was introduced to the author of "Marmion," to whose talk about the feudal Highlanders he listened with rapture, and perhaps not less intently to his recitation of Campbell's "Lochiel's Warning."

The shop at No. 32 was in a turmoil on 1 March, 1812. "Childe Harold" was being published. That night Byron slept at his rooms at No. 8 St. James's Street, over the chemist's shop, and on the morrow (2 March) he awoke, as he said, to find himself famous: "Childe Harold" was in every one's hand, in every one's mouth. Sir Egerton Brydges, walking down Bond Street, saw it in the windows of all the booksellers. "I entered a shop and read a few stanzas, and was not surprised to find something extraordinary in them, because I myself had anticipated much from his 'Hours of Idleness.' . . . The



affair of this mighty fame was an affair of a day—nay, of an hour—minute. The train was laid ; it caught fire, and it blazed. If it had missed fire at first, I doubt if there would have been a second chance. It began at noon ; before night the flame was strong enough to be everlasting."

Moore tells of Byron's table being strewn with letters from statesmen, great ladies, and unknown admirers, and of the transformation of the poet's outlook on London. "In place of the desert which London had been to him but a few weeks before, he now not only saw the whole splendid interior of high life thrown open to receive him, but found himself among its illustrious crowds its most distinguished object." Which of us has not given Byron that ovation in his heart ?

It has not ill-happened that geography is now enthroned at 32 Fleet Street, for "Childe Harold" is the sublime of geography. Those shrine-worshippers who demand evidence of Byron's visits to the house can be satisfied. He would come straight from Angelo's fencing-rooms and make lunges with his cane at Murray's books. The act was typical of his entry into literature and Fleet Street, for he came, not as the scribes, but drenched in youth and the love of life. When Miller had received the last manuscript of Johnson's Dictionary from Fleet Street, and exclaimed "Thank God ; I have seen the last of him !" this was life groaning under the burden of literature. When Murray said of Byron's incursions into his shop, "I was often very glad to be rid of him," this was literature disturbed by excess of life.

Byron hated the "shop" and the cliquishness of the literary system. He was furious when he learned that Murray had shown his manuscript to Gifford of the



"Quarterly" and other critical cronies. To Dallas he wrote, "I *will* be angry with Murray. It was backshop, Paternoster Row, paltry proceeding"—this reference of his manuscript to others—and he adds, with an interesting touch, "If the experiment had turned out as it deserved, I would have raised all Fleet Street, and borrowed the giant's staff from St. Dunstan's Church to immolate the betrayer of trust."

It would be good to see on the front of 32 Fleet Street a tablet recording the fact that this was the birthplace, in the publishing sense, of the poem which poured like fire over Europe, bearing Byron's name from Fleet Street to the Acropolis. Howbeit the connexion of Byron with Fleet Street has been celebrated with zeal, though on a less suitable spot, by Sir J. Tollemache Sinclair. At No. 85, on the same side as 32, this gentleman has adorned the corridor of his property, Byron House, with marble tablets inscribed with a veritable anthology of Byron's poetry, and with a bust of the "Pilgrim of Eternity." The quotations include a couplet from the "Hints from Horace," in which the case for Byron will again and again be found.

'Tis not enough, ye Bards, with all your art,  
To polish poems ;—they must touch the heart.

Elsewhere in London Byron's memory has been honoured. His house in St. James's Street and his birthplace in Holles Street are marked with tablets. His statue is in Hyde Park, oddly near to Londonderry House, with its suggestions of Lord Castlereagh, whom he hated, and facing the great social whirlpool which he never wished to see again. His London haunts have hardly changed. No. 4 Bennet Street, where he

lodged, is still a lodging-house, and it is probable that its very area railings are those he knew. His rooms in the "Albany," from which he set out to be married, and his house in Piccadilly, from which he set out to exile and death, are still standing. Samuel Rogers' house, where he first met Moore, and Murray's drawing-room, where he first met Scott, are unchanged; and you may still walk the pavement in Albemarle Street on which he paced to compose "The Corsair." Hard by is the house that was Watier's Club, where he was one of three men of letters who belonged to that home of dancing and gaming. Everywhere his footsteps are to be traced, and in going out of London your eye may fall on the woods of Dulwich, which he knew under Dr. Glennie, or on the spire of Harrow Church, where he dreamed as a boy, and where his daughter is buried.

Let Fleet Street, then, take dignity from Johnson and glory from Byron. It is curious that Byron's grandmother, Sophia Trevanion, knew Johnson and was one of his favourites. In mentioning this, Mrs. Piozzi adds her conviction (upon which there may be two opinions) that the Doctor would have been glad that his old friend's grandson was a poet. What Johnson would have thought of "Childe Harold" let imaginative critics decide. What Byron thought of Johnson may be discovered from his letters. "'Tis a grand poem, and *so true*,"—he exclaimed on the "Vanity of Human Wishes"—"true as the roth of Juvenal himself. The lapse of ages changes all things—time—language—the earth—the bounds of the sea—the stars of the sky, and everything 'above, around, and underneath' man, *except man himself*, who has always been, and always will be, an unlucky rascal."

Strange that the "Highway of Letters" should have

known these two men : the traditional author battling for the dignity and rewards of literature, and the favourite of the gods winning the game without a thought of the rules. Strange that each should have voiced that larger pessimism which sombres and does not weaken. Yet it is to Johnson alone that Fleet Street would talk of its troubles to-day. We cannot confer with a comet, but under a planet we can live and prophesy. Could Johnson revisit the glimpses of Fleet Street, and be heard at the "Cheshire Cheese," what words should we hear across the sawdust? I suppose that nothing would amaze him more than the inclusion of literature among the necessities of life, the openness of its doors, the abundance of its emoluments and honours. He would find that literature had found its place in the sun. Would the spectacle have fulfilled his hopes, or would the "Vanity of Human Wishes" recur to him as an unfinished theme?

He would presently focus his attention on the forms of literature and the classes of writers that he had himself known and loved in Fleet Street; he would examine the position of the poet, the essayist, and the scholar. Quickly he would make the discovery that toil and want are still their frequent portion. He would hear recent life-stories quite as poignant as those of Savage and Collins. He would hear of pensions, and despair. He would find that the public is now the only patron, and would be amazed by his misgivings on this subject. He would be baffled once more to distinguish between the misfortunes and errors of authors. And, finally, I trow he would convince himself that beneath all that multiplication of books and readers which he had desired, beneath all phenomena of production and reward, Literature (as he and Goldsmith understood it) remains a precarious

profession, because it gives competence and security to its followers only as the weather gives us a spell of sunshine. We may observe and predict, but the old uncertainty will return, the storms and frosts surprise us, and the eternal variations of adjustment between the brooding writer and the stressful world assert themselves.

These unstable conditions are never left behind ; they advance with the wave, being of the very character of its motion. There will always be writers of poetry and belles-lettres who cannot find enough readers. This will be their misfortune ; but it will not be the misfortune of literature ; on the contrary, it will be its dayspring and rebirth. A system that would prevent it must kill literature by eliminating its inspirer—struggle. Moreover, a society that could welcome every attack on itself, abet every iconoclasm, and applaud every dream that transcended and threatened its own order, would be as temperamental as its geniuses, and would dissolve in its own fluidity ; it would hardly have need of formal literature.

Deep down in its heart Fleet Street knows that fine literature is for a section of God's fools. The old contempt of it, under which Johnson writhed, had that much truth, just as the old pride which forbade the author to take material reward on pain of social descent had a sanction. I suppose that Byron was the last poet who refused money in Fleet Street. He relented and grew rich. We who affirm the dignity of letters with Johnson, and the right to be fortunate with Byron, will best preserve a sane courage if we remember that in dismissing ancient prejudices we have not dismissed the essential character of literature, which is a spiritual activity seeking to establish spiritual contacts with the world. Such an affair can lead to riches, or a com-

petence, only through an affinity between the writer and a large body of readers. If that does not exist he may be able to create it by deflection and surrender. Whether that is justified is a tragic question for many. That such surrender is often justified, that it may be free from all baseness, and that it is sometimes enjoined by a prudence that ought to prevail, one cannot doubt—any more than one can doubt that the refusal to submit will ennoble idealists to the end of time.

But if the old shadows haunt the writer's path, so do the old joys. He may exclaim on his work, with Hazlitt, "What abortions are these Essays! What errors, what ill-pieced transitions, what crooked reasons, what lame conclusions! How little is made out, and that little how ill!" But if, with Hazlitt, he can add, "Yet they are the best I can do," and if memory restores to him the thrill of far intention and the abandon of artistic purpose, he will not refrain from pride nor forget that he has travelled that highway of letters along which Milton and Johnson and Lamb have passed, as surely as he who walks to Finchley is on the same road as he who arrives at York.

## CHAPTER X

### "STEPPING WESTWARD"

The Great Chare—Optical Illusions—The Napoleon Legend—The Second-hand Book Market—Every Book has its Buyer—The Superfluous Book—Georgius Tertius—The Nocturnal Remembrancer—The Haymarket—Wordsworth at the Opera—G. A. S.—Pierce Egan—Colonel Panton—The "*Eidophusikon*"—Snuff *in excelsis*—"Old Nosey"—Jermyn Street and a Husband in Hiding—Carlyle in Regent Street—"Sartor Resartus" in Search of a Publisher—A "Dog's-meat Tart of a Magazine"—Talks at Fraser's—Edward FitzGerald—Change for a Sovereign—The High Street of Mayfair—The Castle of Indolence—Sterne's Death-bed—Gentleman Jackson—Park Lane—The Tragedy of Camelford House—Lydia White—"Conversation" Sharp—"Dizzy always likes Lights"—"Mr. Sydney Smith is coming Upstairs"

THE spot where Dr. Johnson thought he beheld the full tide of human existence, and whose centre Sir Robert Peel described as the finest site in Europe, is a Chare or Charing, *i.e.*, a turn or turning. Charing Cross, in short, is the place adorned with a memorial cross, at which the Thames makes a great turning. For it is here that the river, which has flowed in a northerly direction from Vauxhall and under Westminster Bridge, resumes its eastward direction to the sea. This immense, unseen chare it is which makes the geography of central London something of a puzzle by setting many places on the north side of the Thames south of places on the opposite bank. I have rarely been able, without risk of personal damage,



and without the support of a map, to maintain that Hyde Park Corner is a shade south of Waterloo Station.

It is good that London's centre should bear a name of immemorial use and elemental origin. But the place itself remains mysterious. If you wish to baffle an old Londoner, ask him to direct you to No. 66 Charing Cross. For Charing Cross is not a street, nor does it answer to any other convenient description. It is a small district, of which probably not even an individual postman holds the clue. No. 1 is discoverable some distance down Northumberland Avenue. No. 14 may be looked for, with a hope of success, in Whitehall. No. 53 is in Spring Gardens, and the higher numbers are in Cockspur Street. But all are in Charing Cross.

Charing, in short, is still a scattered village, and Trafalgar Square is its village green, with the Nelson Column for its Maypole. But the place has suffered two great changes: its ancient cross was removed two and a half centuries ago, and Northumberland House disappeared in 1874. The present cross in the Strand forecourt of the railway-station is not fifty years old. It was completed in 1865, from the design of Edward M. Barry, A.R.A., who based his drawings on the very imperfect and doubtful records of the original cross. Its height from the ground to the gilt copper cross on its summit is about 70 feet. The eight crowned statues in the upper story are all representations of Queen Eleanor, and the shields lower down are copied from the Eleanor crosses at Northampton, Waltham, and Westminster, and are full of interest. One of them is the shield of Ponthieu.

The old cross stood on the ground now occupied by the equestrian statue of Charles I. This was the first equestrian statue ever seen in England. Cast in

1633 from the design of Hubert le Sœur, it was buried during the Revolution, to be re-erected here in 1674. The King's original sword and straps have had to be replaced. On the night of 13 April, 1810, these accoutrements fell from the statue. They are said to have been picked up by a porter of the old Golden Cross Hotel, named Moxam, and given into the charge of Mr. Eyre, a neighbouring trunk-maker, by whom they were made over to the Board of Green Cloth, and were then replaced. Finally, they were stolen from the statue either in 1844, when Queen Victoria was on her way to open the Royal Exchange, or in the Coronation crush of 1838. Both statements are made.

This statue, and the lion on Northumberland House, have afforded examples of the ease with which the human mind may be misled. It has been stated that Le Sœur blew out his brains on discovering that, with all his striving after a masterpiece, he had forgotten to give the King's horse a saddle-girth. Believing the story, Londoners do not perceive that the saddle-girth is there. Yet forty years ago they were able to see the Percy lion wag its tail on Northumberland House, when they had been told to expect the phenomenon.

Another myth, or historical doubt, has its seat in this region, and has been discussed with some warmth. I refer to Napoleon's supposed secret visit to London, in 1791 or 1792, and his taciturn appearances at the Northumberland Coffee-house, opposite Northumberland House. A recent newspaper correspondence was enriched by an indirect opinion from Lord Rosebery, and an interesting letter from the Right Honourable John Burns. Lord Rosebery declared that he had never heard of the rumour. Mr. Burns, on the other

hand, showed that the story was quoted before 1820.

The usual, but very insufficient, authority for the story that Napoleon lodged in a house in George Street, near the Adelphi, is John Timbs's "Romance of London," published in 1865, where we read: "It is not generally known that the great Napoleon Bonaparte lodged in a house in George Street, a thoroughfare preserving the Duke's Christian name (i.e., the name of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, from whom Villiers Street also takes its name), which extends from Duke Street to the Embankment. Old Mr. Mathews, the bookseller of the Strand, used to relate that he remembered the Corsican ogre residing here for five weeks in 1791 or 1792, and that he occasionally took his cup of chocolate at the Northumberland Coffee-house, opposite Northumberland House: there he read much, and preserved a provoking taciturnity towards the frequenters of the coffee-room; though his manner was stern, his deportment was that of a gentleman." George Street is now merged in York Buildings, but the street practically disappeared when the Embankment was formed. And what of Mr. Mathews? Mr. James Mathews died on 19 September, 1804, aged sixty-two, after a career as "a very respectable bookseller and vendor of medicines in the Strand, and father of Mr. Mathews of Drury Lane Theatre." Timbs being then only three years old, could not have heard the bookseller tell his story. Whence did he derive it? It is suggested that he took it from a communication to the "Birmingham Journal," made so late as 1855 by one G. Batson, who adduced other local authorities for the story:—

"Mr. J. Coleman, of the Strand, who is now 104 years of age, and whose portrait and biographical sketch

appeared in the 'Illustrated London News,' February, 1850, and who knew perfectly well M. Bonaparte, who, while he lived in London, which was for five weeks in 1791 or 1792, lodged at a house in George Street, Strand, and whose chief occupation appeared to be in taking pedestrian exercise in the streets of London. Hence his marvellous knowledge of the great metropolis, which used to astonish any Englishmen of distinction who were not aware of this visit. I have also heard Mr. Matthews (*sic*), the grandfather of the celebrated comedian, Mr. Thomas Goldsmith, of the Strand, Mr. Graves, Mr. Drury, and my father ; all of whom were tradesmen in the Strand in the immediate vicinity of George Street, speak of this visit." This tends to show that there had been a firm tradition of Napoleon's visit in the Strand neighbourhood.

Mr. Burns, however, drew attention to the fact that in Christopher Kelly's once well-known work, "Kelly's Wars," published as early as 1817, this passage occurs: "As it has been frequently asserted and as often denied, that Bonaparte once came to England to solicit Government for a Commission in the British Army, it may be proper to state that he was in England, but the object of his appearance here is not known. He lodged at a house in the Adelphi, in the Strand, and remained in London but a short time. This information was obtained from General Miranda, who asserts that he visited him in England at the time. It is probable that the period when Bonaparte was here was about the middle of the year 1793."

Against this record three objections are made. (1) That Kelly is an untrustworthy writer ; (2) that Napoleon's movements at the period of his alleged

visit can be traced from day to day, and that they negative the story; (3) that Napoleon never referred to such a visit in his reported conversations. Undoubtedly it is strange that, if Napoleon had paid this visit to London, he should not have mentioned it to the many persons to whom he poured out his memories, especially during his exile in St. Helena. The legend cannot be taken seriously, but it is interesting, and somehow we need it.

The ganglionic importance of Charing Cross has been increased within short memory by the formation of the Charing Cross Road. As the new second-hand bookselling centre of London, this street was a bleak exchange for Old Booksellers' Row. There seemed to be too much light in it, and too much noise, and the district had no bookish associations, unless one took them from the long-vanished Mews Gate at Trafalgar Square where honest Tom Payne was for years the bookseller and companion in letters of men like Porson, and Malone, and George Stevenson and Sir John Hawkins, and old Cracherode of the Museum.

Time has reconciled most of us to the new haunt, which has the merit of spaciousness. The apparently constant and equal supply of second-hand books, week in and week out, during years, gives one at times a sense of baffled wonder. Where does the arithmetical progression lapse, or conceal itself? Teufelsdröckh feared the worst, and surmised, "If such supply of printed paper should rise so far as to choke up the highways and public thoroughfares, new means must of necessity be had recourse to." But even in the Charing Cross Road there is room for the motor-omnibuses to pass, and the enigma remains.

There is, indeed, one circumstance which mitigates

the bibliopolic nightmare. It is that for every volume there is a buyer at last. I remember that one golden evening more than ten years ago, when the sun was setting over Red Lion Square and shooting its last rays directly down the Passage, which took on its best seventeenth-century air, I talked with one of the book-sellers on this very subject of improbable sales. And I made some notes on our talk, which ran as follows: "Can you," I asked, "sell a book like this?" The book was a calf-bound folio, "*Voyage de Corneille de Brun*," printed in Paris in 1714. Surely, I thought, Le Brun's sun set long ago; yet here, in the night of its uselessness, in the age of Nansen and Sven Hedin, his "voyage" is hopefully exposed for sale. "Can you," I said, "sell a book like this?"

"I sold another copy not six months ago. Here and there is a man who is interested in old voyages to the Levant and round about the East, and who perhaps finds the plates interesting."

"But to buy it! I could understand him consulting such a book at the Museum. It is obsolete; it is hardly literature; it is in French; it weighs, I think, sixteen pounds; and you find that a man will come and give you coin of the realm for it and take it away?"

"I do."

"Here is 'Dryden's Fables' in folio, magnificently printed, but surely difficult to sell now?"

"I shall sell it. Indeed it is partly sold already, for it has lost the plates."

"Well, now, you won't say that you can easily sell these volumes that your kitten is playing on: Sir Paul Rycaut's 'The Turkish History,' 1687? I see it is full of Othmans and Amuraths and Bajazets—gorgeous old fellows, no doubt; but can you sell such a book to a passer-by?"



"Not easily ; but it will go."

"Echard's 'History of England,' in three volumes?"

"That will not sell easily."

"Rollin's 'Ancient History,' in seven volumes?"

"Yes ; to a few libraries."

"Newton's 'Principia'?"

"Yes."

"Now, I put it to you that you cannot sell 'Zimmerman on Solitude.'"

"But I can."

"Or 'Sturm's ——'."

"'Reflections.' I own I am surprised when I sell that book, but I am asked for it, and also for Hervey's 'Meditations Among the Tombs.'"

"What are those books?"

"Ah, that is a French Dictionary of Medical Science, published in Paris in 1812. I have the complete set in sixty volumes, all beautifully bound in calf!"

"You can sell sixty volumes of an obsolete French medical work, all beautifully bound in calf, to a Londoner in Red Lion Passage to-day?"

"I bought it entirely with that idea."

"It seems that as long as a book is a book it will sell at some price to some person."

"That is so."

Consequently one can form a library in the Charing Cross Road in the unshaken faith that one can sell it there too. And this is the strength of the second-hand book market, and the stay of book-lovers. If the purchase of a book meant irrevocable possession, literature would soon perish from fatty degeneration of libraries. For the necessity to get rid of books is moral and absolute. Many books which are highly useful, highly convenient, and profitable, are seen at last to be only money-changers in our temple. They

cannot all have "honest backs." Charles Lamb, whom bookmen rightly canonize, knew this, and was entirely free from bookish superstitions or false delicacies. He did not value, for instance, inscribed presentation copies of books from his intimate friends, even when these were men of literary distinction and education. At Enfield he threw such books out of his window. Thomas Westwood, who added many of these missiles to his shelves, relates: "A Leigh Hunt, for instance, would come skimming to my feet through the branches of the apple-tree (our gardens were contiguous); or a Bernard Barton would be rolled downstairs to me from the library door. 'Marcian Colonna' I remember finding on my window-sill, damp with the night's fog; and the 'Plea of the Midsummer Fairies' I picked out of the strawberry-bed." When these bombardments were in progress, Lamb was merely adjusting his soul to his books.

George the Third on horseback, Mr. Dent's time-ball, models of steamships: these are the common objects of Cockspur Street, that irregular bow of houses and shops which adds nothing to the symmetry of Trafalgar Square. Formerly Cockspur Street was haunted by Scotchmen; to-day it suggests Liverpool. Against its plate-glass windows on Sunday evenings you see the gloved hands of London maidens tracing the route to Winnipeg. Here also the American, busy with his pocket-book, looks up to see, cantering dolefully in bronze, the monarch from whom his fathers took America.

Georgius Tertius did not arrive there without trouble. It was on 3 August, 1836, that the Duke of Cumberland drew back the curtains from a statue which brought its sculptor more praise than profit. Matthew Cotes Wyatt contracted to provide every-

thing for £4000. Originally the statue was to have been placed at the foot of Waterloo Place, but it was discovered that the Duke of York (on the column) would then turn his back on his Royal father. So Cockspur Street had the honour, and was at first inclined to reject it. A firm of bankers thought that an equestrian figure in the street would be a nuisance, and obtained a temporary injunction against its erection. The rule was quashed, and the unveiling took place two months later than had been intended. At the ceremony the Duke of Cumberland praised the design in terms of contrast: the group, he said, had the great merit that it was not supported by the clumsy contrivance of a piece of rock, or by an ancillary serpent, and the horse did not rest like an opossum on his tail. The following inscription was to have been cut on the pedestal:—

"To His Most Excellent Majesty George the Third, King of Great Britain and Ireland, and Defender of the Faith. A Monarch who was the safeguard of Christianity, without the honours of a saint; and the conqueror of half the globe, without the fame of a hero; who reigned amidst the wreck of empires, yet died in the love of his People; when peace was established throughout his wide Dominions, when the literature and the commerce of his country pervaded the world, when British valour was without a rival, and the British character without a stain." This derangement of epitaphs was suppressed—in the interests, I suppose, of public cheerfulness.

In Cockspur Street flourished George the Third's intimate friend (for such he was deemed) and military button-maker, Christopher Pinchbeck. Industrious authors and journalists were indebted to him for a patent "nocturnal remembrancer," which is dread-

fully described as a series of tablets with notches to serve as guides for writing in the dark. This instrument was probably found to be in advance of human nature, but it should appeal to the relentless author of "Do It Now."

"The Scots go generally to the British," writes Defoe, when he is enumerating the London coffee-houses. The British Coffee-house stood in the middle of Cockspur Street on a site which a few years ago was occupied by Mr. Stanford's map warehouse. Here Tobias Smollett and Dr. Alexander Carlyle were sitting when the news of the Battle of Culloden set all London "mafficking" for joy. It was an ill night for Scotchmen, but Carlyle and Smollett left the coffee-house to walk to Mayfair. The crowds were so rough that they were glad to step into a quiet corner to put their wigs in their pockets and unsheathe their swords, which they carried in their hands up the Haymarket. Smollett cautioned his friend to hold his tongue, "for John Bull," he said, "is as haughty and valiant to-night as he was abject and cowardly on the black Wednesday when the Highlanders were at Derby." When Carlyle next saw Smollett he was shown the manuscript of the "Tears of Scotland."

Londoners may hardly credit the fact that such a street as the Haymarket should have been a market for hay and straw until 1830; and yet after nearly eighty years this street retains certain relics of the business. On its western side two jobmasters still flourish. Over the way at the corner of Orange Street is a very old saddlery house, with saddlers working in the view of passers-by. In Orange Street, Oxenden Street, Whitcomb Street, and St. Alban's Place are stables or hints of stables. Some of these have become

garages. The hay market extended down the whole length of the street, and it is curious that the cab-rank of to-day is allowed the same large limits. A little news-shop, which specializes in racing journals, suggests, if it does not lineally perpetuate, the horsey traditions of the Haymarket.

To-day the street is dominated by theatres, art-shops, and foreign restaurants. It has also a mission in sporting and travel equipments. Here you may buy golf-sticks, alpine axes, shooting-stools, driving-gloves, knapsacks, and even—as I lately noticed—"a fine old pair of George III duelling pistols."

The dramatic and musical memories of the Haymarket would set up half a dozen authors. They have already done so. I pass these by, with a salute to the few relics of the old Her Majesty's and its arcades—landmarks of yesterday's London. The present theatre is the fourth that has been built on a site which is associated with Handel. Earlier still, Addison declared that the noise of the Haymarket stage battles could be heard at Charing Cross.

To the second Haymarket opera house Wordsworth paid at least one visit, and I pick this fact out of the immense and splendid annals of the spot because a vision of Wordsworth in a London theatre is rare. Next morning William Jerdan, the editor, met the Lake poet at a breakfast-party, and was so astonished by the shrewdness of his criticisms on the singing, and even on the terpsichorean feats of the evening, that he asked the poet to contribute to the "Literary Gazette" impressions of the continental cities whither he was then bound. Wordsworth declined, but Jerdan's proprietor desired him to renew his request in case "Mr. Wordsworth only wanted a little poetical pressing." However, Jerdan did not succeed in establish-



ing Wordsworth as the father of the descriptive article. The poet replied, "Periodical writing, in order to shine, must be ambitious; and this style is, I think, in the record of tours and travels, intolerable, or at any rate the worst can be chosen." He added, "My model would be Gray's Letters and Journal, if I could muster courage and set seriously about anything of the kind; but I suspect Gray himself would be found flat in these days." The courted writer is not always so candid and sagacious.

A descriptive writer who knew better than to take Gray for his model, or to be "flat" on any other theory of travel-talk, was George Augustus Sala; and Sala may be said to have started in his career from the Haymarket. For it was hereabouts that he conceived his final distaste for that "real life in London" of which the Haymarket was long the vortex. His conversion took place at an early hour of the morning and rose out of a dispute with Mr. Jehoshaphat, a Panton Street *restaurateur*, concerning a bottle of champagne for which fifteen shillings had been charged. In the course of a difficult argument Sala found himself on the floor, where he received a well-aimed blow from Mr. Jehoshaphat's richly bejewelled fist. This was the origin of that damaged nose which in after years became a landmark of Fleet Street. The wound was sewn up at Charing Cross Hospital. Sala bore no grudge to Mr. Jehoshaphat, who, he said, had done him a lasting service; for while his nose was reconstituting itself it was borne in upon him that the time was come for him to say good-bye to Bohemia. He married forthwith, and began those Gargantuan studies in books, sauces, dress, derivations, and intellectual bric-à-brac which made him the "G.A.S." of a myriad readers.



It was fitting, therefore, that near the Haymarket Sala should have seen, a few years before the Panton Street massacre, the worn-out creator of Jerry Hawthorn and Corinthian Tom. For it was by the night-scenes of the Haymarket that Parliament was induced, in 1872, to pass the Act that made half-past twelve the closing hour for licensed premises in London. That Act turned down the lights on the Tom and Jerry theory of London life. Sala relates that in 1859, or thereabouts, he met Pierce Egan in the coffee-room of a tavern in Rupert Street. His portrait of the old man is masterly, and I will not curtail it.

"Pierce had long since fallen into the sere and yellow leaf, and was well-stricken in the vale of years; in fact, he was seventy-seven when I saw him, and the year of my meeting with him was the last in his life. A little wearish old man, somewhat melancholy by nature, averse to company in his latter days, and much given to solitariness. Such a one was Democritus, as Burton, in 'The Anatomy of Melancholy,' described the philosopher of Abdera, from the word-picture left by Hippocrates. Pierce Egan, as I remember him, had a rather quavering voice, and a shrinking, shuffling manner, as though the poor old gentleman had found the burden of his life a great misery to him, and was yearning to shake it off.

"I had drunk deep of his books from my earliest boyhood. I had copied, in pen-and-ink, scores of the etchings made by George and Robert Cruikshank for the illustration of 'Life in London,' and I could not help asking myself, mentally, and with mournful dismay, whether this withered patriarch could be the renowned Pierce Egan whose proficiency in slang had been praised in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' who had been the life and soul of several sporting

'free-and-easies,' and a referee at a hundred prize-fights.

"Still, you will remember that which Burton says of the occasional relaxation of Democritus : *Howsoever it was, there he lived at last in a garden in the suburbs, wholly betaking himself to his studies and a private life, saving that sometimes he would walk down to the haven, and laugh heartily at such variety of ridiculous objects which there he saw.* So it was with Pierce Egan the Elder. I forget whether he smoked ; but Holt and I soon managed to wreath his old head with garlands of cerulean vapour, not from cigars, if you please, but from good honest 'yards of clay' of the Broseley pattern ; and then, after a few glasses of rum punch, the cockles of Pierce's heart were warmed ; the old man became eloquent ; he began to talk of Tom Spring, and Tom Belcher, and Bob Gregson, and other famous gladiators of the bygone ; he told us of Jack Mitton and of Gully, the pugilist, who retired from the prize-ring to become eventually a Member of Parliament. He descanted on the cock-fighting, the bull-baiting, the badger-drawing, the ratting, and the dog-and-duck fighting he had seen in the brave days of old ; he had known Shaw the Lifeguardsman, he had played billiards with Jack Thurtell ; he was the abstract and chronicle of the manners of an age which had vanished, and which, it is most devoutly to be hoped, will never repeat itself on this sublunary sphere again."

Small though it is, Pantton Street stands in a certain fatherly relation to many of the streets around it. Colonel Pantton was a notorious gambler of the Restoration period. One night, at Piccadilly Hall, he won an enormous sum, and, never touching cards or dice again, lived in discreet luxury until his death

in 1681. He built Panton Street, and it is an interesting fact that Sir Christopher Wren, as Surveyor-General, reported to Charles II on Panton's building projects, which he said would be useful to the public, "especially by opening a new street from the Haymarket into Leicester Fields." Panton was allowed, therefore, to proceed with his plans, and he left his impress on the whole neighbourhood. Panton Square, as well as Panton Street, was named after him; and his daughter married Henry, fifth Lord Arundel of Wardour, from whom Wardour Street and Arundel Street were named.

The little square without a name into which Arundel Street leads, as into a blind alley, was formerly known as Panton Square. Here, where a few private hotels monopolize the silence of a small lagoon in the traffic of Coventry Street, the "Eidophusikon" devised by Philip de Loutherbourg, R.A., was deemed to be something more than a beautiful peep-show. When, after Garrick's day, there was talk of reducing his salary at Drury Lane, where he was the principal scene-painter, De Loutherbourg resigned his post and planned his "Eidophusikon" as a public spectacle. All London came to Panton Square to see this delightful show in which, by a combination of painted canvas with new and ingenious methods of lighting, and clever imitations of natural sounds, some remarkable effects were produced.

The "Eidophusikon," indeed, attracted painters as well as the public. Sir Joshua Reynolds came round from Leicester Square, and night after night Gainsborough walked up the Haymarket from Schomberg House to obtain a good seat. Gainsborough, who was always ready to be captivated by irregular and experimental art (witness his sponge and sugar-tongs

exploits at Bath) could talk of nothing but the "Eidophusikon." The stage on which the brilliant Alsatian scene-painter worked was little more than six feet wide, yet within that space he was able to convey the impression of many miles of receding and mysterious country. The first tableau represented the view from One Tree Hill, in Greenwich Park, a view extending over river and town to the heights of Highgate and Harrow. On this scene De Louthembourg threw the effects of daybreak and high noon. A contemporary writer describes the various scenes. A storm at sea, with the loss of an Indiaman, was represented with great effect: "I can never forget the awful impression that was excited by his ingenious contrivance to produce the effect of the firing of a signal of distress in his sea-storm. That appalling sound which he that had been exposed to the terrors of raging tempest could not listen to, even in this mimic scene, without being reminded of the heart-sickening answer, which sympathetic danger had reluctantly poured forth from his own loud gun—a hoarse sound to the howling wind, that proclaimed 'I, too, holy Heaven! need that succour I fain would lend!'"

De Louthembourg's devices for imitating natural sounds might not surprise a stage-manager of to-day, but they were his own. The boom of the signal-gun cost him endless experiment, until he found that a sponge on a whalebone spring, beating against a kind of drum made of parchment, produced both the boom and the dull dying echoes from cloud to cloud. The final scene in the "Eidophusikon" was a lurid realization of Milton's Satan on the burning lake. An impression of immense and forlorn distance was obtained, and amid the peals of thunder "an expert assistant swept his thumb over the surface of a tam-

bourine, which produced a variety of groans that struck the imagination as issuing from infernal spirits."

On the east side of the street, between Coventry Street and Panton Street, stands one of the oldest shops in London. At Fribourg and Treyer's snuff-shop, with its twin bow-windows, it is permissible to believe that Addison and Pope and Gay and Prior filled their snuff-boxes with "best Spanish." The firm supplied George III with snuff until he withdrew his custom on learning that Pitt dealt there too. George IV's "cellar of snuff" and Lord Petersham's "collection of snuff" were in turn acquired by Fribourg and Treyer, and in the latter instance it is on record that the proprietors and their assistants were weighing the purchase for three days. It is a curious circumstance that the original of that vague and often re-incarnated character, "Old Nosey," died in this snuff-shop. The "Gentleman's Magazine" of January, 1783, has this obituary notice: "At Fribourg's snuff-shop in the Haymarket, Mr. Cervetto, father to the celebrated violoncello performer of that name." Cervetto was more than 102 years old when he paid his last visit to Fribourg's. He had played in the Drury Lane orchestra during Garrick's last years and was celebrated for his big nose. At Drury Lane Theatre he was constantly hailed from the gallery as "Nosey," and the cry survived the man as a gallery tag in most theatres.

A curious story is told of Cervetto and his nickname. During a performance at Drury Lane he was hit by an apple thrown at him from the gallery. He immediately climbed to the gallery with one of the sentinels who then attended the theatre, and proceeded with him to the upper gallery, where, with his assistance, he



seized the offender by the collar and sent him to the public-office in Bow Street, where he was convicted of the assault, and ordered to prison for a few days. Then Cervetto relented, and next day went to Sir John Fielding, and not only obtained the man's discharge but gave him money for the loss of time and labour which he had suffered. A few months later, Mr. Cervetto was advised to take horseback exercise. One day when riding in Oxford Street his horse became involved in a huge crowd that was following the cart in which culprits were then conveyed to be executed at Tyburn. Turning his head to look at the malefactor, who was the only prisoner, he recognized the man who had assaulted him at the theatre and to whom he had shown kindness. The man recognized Cervetto, and (this is not a nursery story) motioned, as well as his chains would allow him, to indicate that he recollected him as "Nosey." This insult, under such circumstances, sent Cervetto home for the day in a state of poignant disgust.

The most important offshoot of the Haymarket is Jermyn Street, that elect place of family hotels, fish-and poultry-shops, tailoring ateliers, gunsmiths, and fossils. Its associations with Sir Walter Scott, Sydney Smith, Tom Moore, and Dr. John Hunter are all familiar. Two poets, also, of very different achievement, but not unlike each other in some respects, lodged in Jermyn Street—Gray and Shenstone. An address in Jermyn Street is very desirable to-day, but it costs more than the half-guinea a week which the poet of the "Elegy" was willing to pay for a first-floor front room. One of the oddest of London stories is told of Jermyn Street by Dr. William King. Here, in the fourth year of Queen Anne's reign, there was living in Jermyn Street a certain Mr. Howe. He



enjoyed the comfortable income of £800 a year—and he had married a lady who came of a good West Country family (her maiden name was Mallet), and who had many graces of person and character. The Howes had two children and were happy. One morning, seven or eight years after his marriage, Mr. Howe rose before his usual time, and told his wife that he had pressing business in the City. He left the house, and at midday Mrs. Howe was surprised to receive a note from her husband, telling her that he must start at once for Holland on business, and that he might be absent three weeks or a month. From that hour Mrs. Howe heard no more of her husband for seventeen years. The evening before he returned, Mrs. Howe, still buxom, but with threads of silver in her hair, was entertaining a few friends and relations to supper, among them her brother-in-law, a worthy physician named Dr. Rose. In the midst of their festivity a note, without any signature, was handed to Mrs. Howe, who, after reading it, threw it to Dr. Rose, saying merrily, “You see, brother, old as I am, I have got a gallant.” The note conveyed a request to Mrs. Howe that she would meet the writer the next evening in Birdcage Walk. Dr. Rose, meanwhile, had scrutinized the message carefully, and he declared that it was in Mr. Howe’s handwriting. Mrs. Howe promptly fainted. On her recovery, which was speedy, it was agreed that they should all accompany her on the next evening to Birdcage Walk. The party went at the appointed time, and after a few minutes’ waiting, Mr. Howe calmly walked up and kissed his wife. After some conversation with his friends, he escorted her home, and thenceforward they lived together as peaceably and happily as in the

first years of their marriage. Mr. Howe never gave a reason for his extraordinary conduct, but he made no secret of his movements and actions.

The story he told affords a wonderful instance of the facilities which London afforded, even two hundred years ago, to a man who wished to hide himself from his fellows. When he bade adieu to his wife in Jermyn Street, Mr. Howe had not voyaged to Holland, nor had he then or afterwards left London. He had merely put on a black wig (he was a fair man) and had gone to live in a quiet street in Westminster. After his disappearance Mrs. Howe imagined that, unknown to herself, he might have contracted some heavy debts; consequently for some weeks she went in fear of duns and bailiffs. But nothing happened, and when all inquiries were exhausted Mrs. Howe wisely reconciled herself to her loneliness. Before very long it became necessary for her to obtain a settlement of her husband's affairs, in order that she might have the means of living. She accordingly applied for a special Act of Parliament, and this was granted. Mr. Howe, in his Westminster lodging, allowed the Bill to go through, and enjoyed reading of its progress in the "Gazettes" at a little coffee-house. Ten years passed, and during that period Mrs. Howe's two children died. Wishing to reduce her expenditure, she removed from her house in Jermyn Street to a smaller one in Brewer Street, Golden Square, her movements being followed with watchful interest by her husband, who began more and more to appreciate the luxury of examining his wife, as it were, through a telescope. Opposite to the house in Brewer Street a corn-chandler, named Salt, had his shop. Mr. Howe scraped acquaintance with Mr. Salt, and became so intimate with him that

he dined at his house two or three times a week. On these occasions it was his pleasure to stand at the window and look across the way into his wife's drawing-room, where he watched her little comings and goings. He doubtless had his own reasons for his eccentric behaviour, but he never explained them, and probably enough his escapade was merely a laborious whim; there is no measuring the fondness of man for his own joke, especially when, as in this case, it was cumulative. Once settled in his little Westminster room, Mr. Howe may have found that the interest of the experiment he was making was not to be exhausted in a week, in a month, or even in a year. After all, he might argue, he was doing a very curious thing; he had disappeared round the corner of Jermyn Street to combine the privileges of the living and the dead.

The Londoner associates Regent Street with trade, not literature. So, for that matter, and with grim patience, did Thomas Carlyle when he was having his difficult dealings with James Fraser at No. 215, between Maddox Street and Conduit Street. Of the thousands who perambulate Regent Street on a summer afternoon how many think of it as the publishing birthplace of "Sartor Resartus"? Yet it was hither, to No. 215, that Carlyle walked dolefully on an August day in 1831, like a parent perplexed to know how to place his child in the world—Teufelsdröckh his unlucky name. "It is a work of genius, dear," Mrs. Carlyle had said to him, with no wifely flattery, but with the insight of a mind almost as original as his own. And it was in a length of Mrs. Carlyle's work-box tape that the manuscript had gone to Murray. A week later Carlyle had called at Albemarle Street, found the manuscript untouched,

but adorned with a letter of excuse. "I took it with a silent fury and walked off." He walked to Regent Street, where he dropped in on James Fraser, the bookseller and publisher of "Fraser's Magazine." The manuscript was referred to, and after much "hithering and thithering about the black state of trade" there emerged from honest James's talk the blighting proposal that Carlyle should pay him £150 sterling to launch the book.

A friend advised Carlyle to wait a little before accepting this offer, and he answered that he proposed to wait till the end of eternity. Out again on the pavements of Regent Street wandered the author with his manuscript tied with Jeannie's tape—Jeannie being just then on a visit to Craigenputtock, where she lovingly waited for good news of the "work of genius." He strode through the streets carrying Teufelsdröckh in his hand. No need to tell in detail of the visit to Longman's that same afternoon, of Murray's later shilly-shallying, and of the visit to Colburn and Bentley's, where "a muddy man uttered the common cant of compliments." An interesting relic of these adventures will be found in the "Testimonies of Authors" printed at the end of "Sartor." The first of them, that of "Highest Class Booksellers' Taster," is neither more nor less than the report of Murray's reader, which finally determined the fate of the book in Albemarle Street.

In the end it turned out that the walk to Regent Street on that August afternoon had been sufficiently momentous, for in 1833 "Sartor" began its piecemeal course in what Carlyle, with saturnine humour, called Fraser's "dog's-meat tart of a magazine."

The unpopularity of "Sartor" is an old story. People thought Carlyle a madman, Fraser a fool. The

unhappy Regent Street publisher took care to keep Carlyle well informed of the roasting to which he was subjected by readers of the magazine. Now and again they met at the shop, and the bookseller talked his cautious pessimism about what "paid" and what did not. He told Carlyle that one of his oldest subscribers came in to him and said, "If there is any more of that d——d stuff I will," etc., etc. But from some discerning American had come the antidotal order to send the magazine *so long* as anything of Carlyle's was in it.

Carlyle's opinion of Fraser, if contemptuous, was good-natured: the man wrote his cheques punctually. Often, indeed, the utterer of everlasting Nays and Yeas came to dine at 215 Regent Street. Here on a January night in 1832 he met at Fraser's table James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, and wondered to see this "poor herd body blown hither from his sheepfolds, and how, quite friendless as he was, he went along cheerful, mirthful, and musical." Lockhart was there, and John Galt; but the talk, even so, was "utterly despicable," and nothing was said "that did not even solicit in mercy to be forgotten." On another occasion he appears to have had better fortune, though it is not from his own pen that we have the record. In that curious book, "Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian," the garrulous Dr. Strauss recalls a night at Fraser's at which he met Dr. Maginn, Father Prout, Thackeray, and Carlyle. He says it was a glorious night. At least, they talked literature. "Tom Carlyle grew exuberantly enthusiastic upon Milton, coming down upon the company somewhat heavily, and perhaps unreasonably, with long quotations from the two Paradises and 'Samson Agonistes.'"

Thus with agony, and some mitigations, Carlyle got



his Teufelsdröckh's Clothes Philosophy uttered in the very mart and mirror of fine clothes, and close to the streets which form the Mecca of the Dandiaccal Body. Time has only deepened the irony of the coincidence. Teufelsdröckh mockingly welcomes "printed Paper Aprons as worn by the Parisian Cooks," as giving a new vent to typography and encouragement to modern literature; and he adds, "I hear of a celebrated London Firm having in view to introduce the same fashion, with important extensions, in England." Here, evidently, we have prophecy fulfilled. For the Printed Aprons are now legion. A vast journalism of clothes has sprung up whose mission it is to make hypnotic affirmations on what woman shall wear, and then, as quickly as possible, to demode it off her back. In vain had Carlyle's thunders contended with the reciprocating voices of Regent Street and Fleet Street to-day.

Three of Carlyle's closest friends can be connected with the street. Thackeray I have already mentioned. Down the Regent Street pavement strolled one day Alfred Tennyson and Edward FitzGerald. They stopped to look into a window where busts of Dante and Goethe were displayed. When they had looked at these in silence FitzGerald said, "What is there wanting in Goethe which the other has?" Tennyson answered, "The divine."

Southey relates a ludicrous affair into which he and Campbell fell one day in the Quadrant. Campbell wished to relieve a poor woman, and rushed into the nearest shop to change a sovereign. The shopkeeper, being busy with customers, delayed to oblige him, and the generous poet lost his temper. Thereupon the shopkeeper jumped to the conclusion that he had two rogues to deal with, and rashly sent for the police.



Campbell stood in helpless fury, but when Southey explained things to the constable, that worthy, who happened to be a Glasgow man, exclaimed, “Guidness, mon, is that Maister Camell, the Lord Rector o’ Glaisgie?” After that it was difficult to separate Campbell and the shopkeeper, so warmly were their hands interclasped.

From Regent Street the way into Bond Street is short, and Bond Street is the jewel of the West End, and by many degrees its most compactly interesting street. It is the Rue de la Paix of London, but it is also the comfortable old High Street of Mayfair. No street in the world supplies, on a high plane of quality and expense, so many human wants. It is the place

Where each who wills may suit his wish,  
Here choose a Guido—there his fish.

If you continue the line of the street directly across the map of London, that line will ultimately bring your eye to Peckham, and it was from Peckham that Bond Street drew its name. Sir Thomas Bond lived there. It is now a solemn question whether Bond Street is conscious of the existence of the south-eastern suburb. Sir Thomas built Bond Street in the year 1686, and this date appears on the rebuilt cake-shop at the corner of Piccadilly. Not a few houses in Bond Street, some low, some high, stand out from their neighbours as original or early buildings. And the long street rises and sinks to-day as the fields swelled on which it was built. Woodcock and snipe were shot where now they are trussed.

The most moving story of Bond Street belongs to its earlier period. On a March afternoon in 1768 a party sat at dinner in John Crawford’s rooms in

Clifford Street. The Dukes of Roxburghe and Grafton were there, and Garrick and Hume. They all knew that in Bond Street, a stone's-throw away, Laurence Sterne was lying ill, and by general consent a footman was sent to inquire how he did. That footman was the only person who saw the author of "Tristram Shandy" die. Sent upstairs by the landlady, he found the great author *in extremis*. Afterwards he wrote some curious memoirs, in which the scene is described: "I went into the room and he was just a-dying. I waited ten minutes, and in five he said, 'Now it is come' ! He put up his hands as if to stop a blow, and died in a minute." Where this happened Agnew's now stands.

In Old Bond Street the poet Thomson lived for some time. That his lodging was on the west side of the street is proved by a caustic remark of Mrs. Piozzi, who said that the author of "The Castle of Indolence" was himself so indolent that he seldom rose to see the sun do more than glisten on the opposite windows of the street.

Sir Walter Scott stayed in Long's Hotel in 1815. In Bond Street Nelson had one of his homes. From this street Lord Camelford, knowing himself to be in the wrong, went to Kensington to die a duellist's death. In 1831, Haydon's picture of Napoleon at St. Helena was exhibited at No. 21, and there became the subject of Wordsworth's sonnet containing the lines :—

Sky without cloud—ocean without wave—  
And the one man that laboured to enslave  
The world, sole-standing high on the bare hill.

Byron, too, knew Bond Street well. Here flourished John Jackson, or Gentleman Jackson, the instructor

and pontiff of pugilism in the days of the Regency. His fame is carried into the region of literature by his association with the poet. One day Leigh Hunt saw a small black object dancing on the Thames near Waterloo Bridge and a quiet man on the bank gazing at it intently. The object was the head of Lord Byron, and the quietly dressed onlooker was Gentleman John Jackson, his tutor in all manly sports, named in "Don Juan" as "my old friend and corporal pastor and master."

If Bond Street is Mayfair's High Street, Park Lane is its esplanade. Park Lane and summer join to produce a unique manifestation of London life. Across the road, the motor-cars roll softly for hours—Mayfair emptying its ladies into the Park, and the Park gates returning them softly to Mayfair. Park Lane still suggests the end of the town. The great westward trend of fashion from the Strand and Bloomsbury and Soho was brought to a stand by the Park, and against that aerial barrier it still presses. I have fancied sometimes that the enormous bay-windows and sweeping balconies in Park Lane have been blown out like bubbles by the Goddess of Fashion, straining for space and an occidental sanctity.

The long line of houses perfectly indicates that there has been a scramble for this ultimate foothold. Here we do not find, as art and decorum would suggest, a stately line of great mansions facing the Royal demesne. Instead, we have a costly higgledy-piggledy, relying on later and auxiliary elegances for its effect. Of the façades before you, half are fronts and half are backs. The houses are of all shapes and sizes; some suggest small palaces and some glorified bathing-machines. It is indeed the "far-

flung line" of the great host whose taste in residence has followed the sun with an almost panic fastidiousness. Let rearguards like Carlton Terrace be massive; the great Lane knows that the race is won, with the Park before it like the inviolable sea. Therefore up and down its length has run all the foam of adornment—ivory paint, delicate balconies, censers of perfume, and awnings that respond to the flower-beds to which they slant.

In Mayfair you receive the suggestion of "all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave" to London, yet the annals of luxury and ease are leavened in every street by those of wit, art, and culture. By those, also, of tragedy. At the head of Park Lane, retired in brickly seclusion, stands Camelford House, the first home, after her marriage, of the most loved and lamented of royal girls. In November of 1817 the blow fell, and it is curious that the nation's grief was uttered by the exiled poet whose statue now rises on the borders of Park Lane. It was in Venice that Byron forgot all his agitations in those lines of sweeping sadness: "Of sackcloth was thy wedding-garment made."

Both Byron and Scott are recalled in Park Street, where lived and learned the eccentric, literary, society-loving Lydia White. She kept her little ball rolling in Park Street in spite of age and dropsy. As Miss Diddle this lady figures in Byron's forgotten "literary eclogue," "The Blues." Rogers said of her in 1826: "How wonderfully she does hold out! They may say what they will, but Miss White and *Missolonghi* are the most remarkable things going." A year later Lydia White died, and Scott wrote: "She had a party at dinner on the Friday before, and had written with her own hand invitations for another party. . . .



### PARK LANE

THE "FAR FLUNG LINE" OF THE GREAT HOST WHOSE TASTE IN RESIDENCE HAS FOLLOWED THE SUN WITH AN ALMOST PANIC FASTIDIOUSNESS (P. 274)





She was not, and would not, be forgotten, even when disease obliged her, as it did for years, to confine herself to her couch; and the world, much abused for hard-heartedness, was kind in her case—so she lived in the society she liked. No great expenditure was necessary for this. She had an easy fortune, but not more. Poor Lydia! I saw the Duke of York and her in London, when Death, it seems, was brandishing his dart over them. 'The view o't gave them little fright.'"

Number 23 Park Lane, next to Lord Brassey's well-known house, was eighty years ago the home of "Conversation" Sharp. Here in his study he had portraits of Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds, of whom he could talk at first-hand as late as 1833. Richard Sharp falls into a group of City men whose social or other talents brought them into choice company in the West End. He belonged to the West India firm of Boddington, Sharp & Phillips in Fish Street Hill. Afterwards he was head of the house of Richard Sharp & Co., of Mark Lane, hat manufacturers. His hat-making was the subject of one of Luttrell's jokes. "I was mentioning," relates Moore, "that some one had said of Sharp's very dark complexion that he looked as if the dye of his old trade had got ingrained in his face." "Yes," said Luttrell, "a darkness that may be *felt*."

The envious said that the conversationalist gave his mornings to the preparation of the remarks and anecdotes by which he meant to shine in the evening, but this, if established, would only have proved that he thought conversation worth while. Examples of Sharp's talk are few and fragmentary, yet the engaging qualities of his mind can be appreciated in the little book of "Letters and Essays" which he issued

in 1834, and which was highly praised by the "Quarterly Review." To read this forgotten book is to find a fountain of worldly wisdom springing up in old Park Lane—a fountain fed not merely from the clubs and dinner-tables at which Sharp triumphed, but from his experience as a public man, a Member of Parliament, and a private adviser of statesmen. On life's decline he writes in a vein of Mayfair philosophy : "Do not wait ; but as you run along, snatch at every fruit and flower growing within your reach ; for, after all can be said, youth, the age of hope and admiration and manhood, the age of business and of influence, are to be preferred to the period of extinguished passions and languid curiosity. At that season our hopes and wishes must have been too long dropping, leaf by leaf, away. The last scenes of the fifth act are seldom the most interesting either in a tragedy or a comedy. Yet many compensations arise as our sensibility decays.

Time steals away the rose, 'tis true,  
But then the thorn is blunted too,

though I like much better than these humiliating thoughts the spirit of Montaigne's sturdy determination, '*Les ans peuvent m'entraîner, mais à reculons.*'"

At the corner of Upper Grosvenor Street, a large bay-windowed house with green lattice shutters and garden railings to match them was for thirty-three years the home of Lord Beaconsfield. The house had been left to his wife by her first husband, Mr. Wyndham Lewis. Here Mrs. Disraeli began that long homely ministry to her husband's comfort which places her high among the wives of statesmen. Once, when asked how she kept Disraeli going, she replied : "I

always have supper ready for him when he comes home, and lights, lights, plenty of lights—Dizzy always likes lights." It was this love of the lights of Mayfair, among which he died, that prompted Sydney Smith's jocular vision of London happiness: "*An immense square with the trees flowering with flambeaux, with gas for grass and every window illuminated with countless chandeliers, and voices reiterating for ever and for ever, MR. SYDNEY SMITH IS COMING UPSTAIRS.*"

## CHAPTER XI

### THE STREET OF SONGS AND SIXPENCES

"The Biggest Street in the City"—Heine in Distress—Byron on London—The Paris Equation—Shakespeare's View from Bankside—London compared—Pageants and Poets—The Hungry Generations—Mr. Scrivener Milton of Bread Street's Boy—Milton Unawares—In Artillery Walk—"Pilgrim's Progress"—A Dinner at Dilly's—An "Extraneous Person"—Poor Susan—An Invisible Street—Richard Jefferies at the Bank—The Street of the China Orange—The Grasshopper—Translating a Statue—An Eccentric Banker—Pope's "Learned Friend of Abchurch Lane"—The Chop-houses—Todgers's—Dickens and the Spirit of Place—Cabbage-leaves and Comedy—The Bridge of Memories—"London Bridge is Broken Down"—A Tyneside Carol—Proverbs of London Bridge—The London Expression—A Wooden Gallery—The Water Gate of London

IN No. 79 of the "Connoisseur," Bonnell Thornton has a story of meeting a tailor in a country inn, about forty miles from London, who traced on a map that hung over the mantelpiece his London haunts. "At last, after having transported me all over the town, he set me down in Cheapside, 'which,' he said, 'was the biggest street in the City.' 'And now,' says he, 'I will show you where I live! That is Bow Church, and thereabouts—where my pipe is, there—just there, my shop stands.' He concluded with a kind invitation to me to come and see him, and pulling out a book of patterns from his coat-pocket, assured me that if I wanted anything in his way, he could afford to let me have a bargain." The name of

Cheapside had long been almost a synonym of London shopkeeping. "You are as arrant a Cockney as any hosier in Cheapside," wrote Swift to Gay, and Cowper's "Gilpin"—founded on the character of John Beyer, the linen-draper, of No. 3 Cheapside—is instinct with this view of the street as the home of the "Cit" and Cockney tradesman.

It was in this Cheapside of trade, in this "biggest street in the City," that Heine made his reflections on London, eighty years ago. "Send a philosopher to London," he wrote, "but no poet! Send a philosopher there, he will hear the pulse of the world beat audibly, and see it visibly—for, if London is the right hand of the world—its active, mighty right hand—then one may regard that street which leads from the Exchange to Downing Street as the world's radial artery. But send no poet to London! This downright earnestness of all things, the colossal uniformity, the machine-like monument, this moroseness even in pleasure; this exaggerated London, smothers the imagination and rends the heart."

These words illustrate the diverse reactions of London. Poet and philosopher himself, Heine was more concerned at the moment to guard his habit of mind than to project himself into that which seemed less as a town than a monstrous camp, or a "stone forest of houses." There is sufficient oddness in the fact that he bade the world send no poet to London when contemplating the street which had nourished Shakespeare and Milton, drawn a song from Wordsworth, been acclaimed as his home by Herrick, and given lodging to Keats. But Heine's dismay in Cheapside was not a singular experience. Many a poetic and sensitive mind has been crushed and emptied, for a time, by the first revelation of London

For the stranger expects a whole, and finds only parts and reference and cross-reference. No view at once synthetic and intimate satisfies the eye ; the total must be compiled. Byron knew this. He who has stood on the Acropolis, he says :

May not think much of London's first appearance—  
But ask what he thinks of it a year hence !

This was the right word to Heine in Cheapside, but he stayed in England only three months, visiting Ramsgate, before he returned to the small cities of Holland and Germany. Four years later he saw Paris for the first time. How different, now, his feelings and exclamations ! London had impressed him as "the greatest wonder which the world can show to the astonished spirit," its people as a "rushing stream of faces, of living human faces, with all their motley passions, all their terrible impulses of love, of hunger, and of hate." And standing in Cheapside, looking into a print-shop window, he had been hustled with plentiful "God-damns." In London he had seen the background first. So soon as he entered Paris, all was foreground and amenity, and the great arch of St. Denis, erected in honour of Louis XIV, seemed to glorify his own entry into the city of politeness, salons, cafés, and social ease. Tragedy there was, in Paris too, but over it all a rosy light and sweet air.

This contrast, drawn by Heine in the excitement of first impressions, is old and familiar. It needed a hundred adjustments and corrections, many of which have been made by Time and changing sentiment. Such hasty violence of comparison, however, is still precipitated by London's lack of ensemble, its shapelessness, and that comparative



inhospitality to the stranger from which its heart is free—if its heart could be found. The Londoner of to-day, without the least deflection of his London love, is enamoured of Paris; simply, I believe, because he finds there a certain relief from the immensity, the inexistence, so to speak, of London. The picture of Paris “comes together” in a way that the picture of London never can. It frames itself. From the terrace under the church of the *Sacré Cœur* you feel that you can drop a stone into Paris. From the terrace above the poignant “*Aux Morts*” monument in the cemetery of *Père Lachaise* you can survey the living city from the dead. But London, seen from Greenwich, or Sydenham, or Highgate, shows less as a city than as Heine’s “camp of men” or as that “county covered with houses” which it was called long before Heine. Sublime and moving, the view can be, but not very intimate or very intelligible.

In the century of Shakespeare’s death, that fine old Londoner, James Howell, called on Paris and on all the cities of Europe to do obeisance to London.

Constantinople first. Her houses, he finds, are but “cottage-like” compared with London’s, and although her situation “upon the most levant point of Europe” is splendid, she “may be called but a nest or banner of slaves.”

Rome is like “a tall man shrunk into the skin of a *Pygmy*.”

Milan, ’tis true, “may pretend much for her dome,” but in “ubiquitary traffique” where stands she?

Venice, though she have the sea for her husband, has no more interest in it than London. And, “while Venice is steeping and pickling in *Salt-water*, London sports herself upon the banks of a fresh, stately River,

which brings into her bosom all the *Spices* of the *East*," etc.

Naples is too hot, for there the sun "doth as it were broyl the *Neapolitan*," whereas he doth "with the gentle reverberations of his rayes but guild the Walls of *London*."

"Touching *Copenhagen* in *Denmark*, and *Stockholm* in *Swethland*, they come far short." Even *Mosco* is but a "huge wooden City environ'd about with a treble wall," and far beneath *London*.

Amsterdam gives our boaster some judicial qualms. But he thinks that "in point of wealth Amsterdam comes short of *London*, for when *Sir Ralph Freeman* was Lord Mayor, it was found out by more than a probable conjecture that He, with the 24 Aldermen, his Brethren, might have bought the estates of one hundred of the richest Bourgemasters in *Amsterdam*."

Paris is also formidable, but the Londoner is not to be dazzled by "the advantage of an *Orbicular* figure," for "by the judgment of those Mathematicians who have observed both Cities, if *London* were cast into a Circle, she would with all her dimensions be altogether as big as Paris."

Finally, he sums up the glories of *London* under twenty headings, and pours out a torrent of words, images, and facts in which the cities of the world are overwhelmed and obscured. *London*, he says, has need of them, but not fear. "*London* by her Navigations findes them out; . . . What goodly vessels doth she send forth, to crosse the Line to the *East Indies*, to *Italy*, and the bottom of the *Streights*, the *Turks* Dominions; as also to the *Baltick* Sea, how she flyes ore the vast *white* Ocean to *Muscovy*, and to hunt the great *Leviathan* in *Greenland*."

Cheapside was, and is, part of "the world's radial

artery." Along it, east and west, many pageants of Anglo-Saxon history have moved. Shopkeeping relieved by royal and civic shows was the note of the street for centuries. To-day, great processions go through Cheapside to the Guildhall, but in Norman, Plantagenet, and Tudor times the street awaited royal entries into London from the east and south. English kings, riding to their coronations, from the Tower to Westminster, passed through it; and when they returned from battle-fields. Royal brides entered London by Cheapside, as did Anne of Bohemia, after her marriage to Richard II, and Margaret of Anjou, with her husband, Henry VI. The birth of the Black Prince was celebrated by a tournament of knights in the street, and here Elizabeth received her Bible from the citizens under a blaze of banners.

For centuries it was the custom for members of the Royal Family to come into the City to be spectators of the Lord Mayor's Show—a fact much forgotten to-day. The circumstances of the visit were simple and friendly, and a house which stood in Cheapside opposite Bow Church acquired great distinction from the fact that its balcony was used by successive monarchs on Lord Mayor's Day. Six reigning Sovereigns, of whom Charles II was the first, are said to have visited this house, and of these no fewer than three, George I, George II, and George III, came to it as the guests of the Quaker family of Barclay. "Wilt thou alight, George, and thy wife Charlotte, and come into my house and view the Mayor's show?" is said to have been the old banker's greeting to his King on the occasion of the Lord Mayor's show in 1761. Barclay was then eighty-one years of age, and in the same

house he had received in much the same manner George III's two predecessors on the throne.

Wherever commerce and national pageantry mingle, you have that stir of life, and those appeals to ambition and imagination, which may be expected to produce some accompanying splendour of Art. And Cheapside is not an exception to this rule. With no other street can we connect such names as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Raleigh, Beaumont, Fletcher, Donne, Milton, Bunyan, Keats, and Wordsworth. The Mermaid Tavern was in Bread Street, and it had an entrance from Cheapside. Many of the Elizabethan wits, poets, and voyagers made the "Mermaid" their evening haunt, and the talk was such, says Jonson, that when at last the company broke up: "We left an air behind us"—words, which when I first transcribed them, were amended by an inspired compositor to read, "We left an ass behind us."

Keats had a brief lodging in 1817 at No. 76 Cheapside, over the passage leading to the Queen's Head Tavern, opposite the Mercers' Hall, and wrote there his sonnet, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," and "Great Spirits now on Earth are Sojourning." That many other poems included in Keats's first volume, that of 1817, were written under Bow Church is certain. But the little volume failed, and in the indifferent roar of Cheapside there may have come to Keats something of the feeling which he afterwards threw into the saddest and loveliest of his verses:—

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird,  
No hungry generations tread *thee* down.

On the Cheapside pavements Milton played as a boy. The picture appealed to Carlyle; "O, Posterity," he chants, "it is within men's memory when there was

an open blacksmith's forge on the north side of Cheap; men openly shoeing horses there. And now it has broad flag-pavements, safe from wheel and horse, even for the maids and children; and there runs about on it one little Boy very interesting to me: 'John Milton,' he says he is; a flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, beautiful little object; Mr. Scrivener Milton of Bread Street's Boy: Good Heavens!"

Against the west wall of St. Mary-le-Bow Church, if you will turn but a step from Cheapside, you may read, cut in stone, the famous epigram: "Three Poets in three distant ages born," whereof one was the Scrivener's boy. The rest of the inscription sets forth that John Milton was born in Bread Street, and baptized in the parish church of All Hallows, in the same street, and that this tablet was removed to St. Mary-le-Bow Church when All Hallows was pulled down, in 1876. Bread Street belongs to the great St. Paul's Churchyard group of streets which forms the wholesale mart of Manchester fabrics and Paris fashions. The same commercial character marks that labyrinth north of Cheapside which brings you to the site of the small house in Artillery Row in which Milton completed "Paradise Lost." The place where the poet drank deeply of the Pierian spring is now occupied by a firm of well-sinkers. Within sight is the belfried brick tower of St. Giles's under which he sleeps and where, at his parish church door, stands his effigy in bronze. This graceful statue was erected a few years ago at the instance of Alderman Sir J. J. Baddeley, and by subscription.

The Milton home in Bread Street stood towards Cheapside on the east side, and on a site now covered by Messrs. Copestake & Crampton's warehouse, numbered 58 to 63. Here, on an upper floor, is preserved



a bust of the poet, with an inscription relating to the site. In those days London houses were not numbered, and the worthy scrivener's address was "at the sign of the Spread Eagle." John Milton was a Cockney of the Cockneys. Not only was he born within sound of Bow bells, but, as Masson pointed out, if the bells had fallen from the steeple they might have crushed the infant in his cradle.

It is left to excisemen to insist that Milton was a great man, but one may pause to remark that his words are more often quoted unawares in Cheapside to-day than Cheapside knows. Our quotations from Milton are pitched in all keys, and we are not always to fly to the context in expectation of developing the thought. Great lines, taken into the language, are often put to the uses of life without reference to their original source or implications. Certainly it is true to say, with Hazlitt, that Milton's Satan expresses the sum and substance of all ambition in one line: "Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable," just as he expresses the sum of all defiance in the lines beginning "All is not lost." These expressions have passed into the language of human effort, and of Cheapside. It is from Satan's sublime invocation to the sun that we take a line which is often applied in ways not at all sublime:—

. . . at whose sight all the stars  
Hide their diminish'd heads.

"Fall'n on evil days" are words to which many variants are given; they were applied by Milton to himself. It is often said that one should not be the man who, "when God sends a cheerful hour refrains." This line is the last of Milton's cheery sonnet to his pupil, Cyriac Skinner, in which he invites him to lay aside





ST. GILES'S, CRIPPLEGATE

... THE BELFRIED BRICK TOWER OF ST. GILES'S UNDER WHICH  
MILION SLEEPS, AND WHERE, AT HIS PARISH CHURCH DOOR,  
STANDS HIS EFFIGY IN BRONZE (P. 285)



his books, "to let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause," and to drench deep thoughts in mirth.

Indeed, the language of pleasure, no less than that of a city's toil and aspiration, has been enriched for all time by Milton. "The light fantastic toe" is his, and "the cricket on the hearth," and the "silver lining" to the cloud, "the busy hum of men," the "sober certainty of waking bliss," and "food of the mind." His, too, the oft-quoted saying: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue." Everyday quotations of Milton are too numerous for comment. I resort to catalogue: "Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme," "Justify the ways of God to men," "All hell broke loose," "Tears such as angels weep," "Chaos and Old Night," "A bevy of fair women," "Musical as is Apollo's lute," "Where more is meant than meets the ear," "Old experience," "Linkèd sweetness long drawn out," "Temper justice with mercy," "That old man eloquent," "Dim religious light," "Fresh woods and pastures new," "The palpable obscure," "A heaven on earth." "Best image of myself and dearer half." The last expression may suggest that "better half" as applied to a wife is an adaptation, of Milton's line, which, however, is itself an adaptation of Sir Philip Sidney's "My better half." But that which was written in homage to women is becoming her literal claim.

Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" was published from a bookseller's shop in Poultry by Nathaniel Ponder, who thereafter was known as "Bunyan Ponder"—a crisp example of an author making a publisher famous. The book was entered by Ponder at Stationers' Hall, and published by him in 1678, at the price of eighteenpence. Three editions were called for within a year.

Booksellers have left their own mark on Cheapside and Poultry. At Charles Dilly's shop in Poultry, Boswell contrived, with infinite diplomacy, the meeting between Dr. Johnson and John Wilkes, on 15 May, 1776. The two men agreed well, Wilkes sharing Dr. Johnson's delight in girding at Scotchmen, and it was here, at Number 22, on another occasion, that the following conversation passed : Wilkes : " Pray, Boswell, how much may be got in a year by an Advocate at the Scotch Bar ? " Boswell : " I believe two thousand pounds. " Wilks : " How can it be possible to spend that money in Scotland ? " Johnson : " Why, sir, the money may be spent in England ; but there is a harder question. If one man in Scotland gets possession of two thousand pounds, what remains for all the rest of the nation ? " Wilkes : " You know, in the last war, the immense booty which Thurot carried off by the complete plunder of seven Scotch isles ; he re-embarked with three and sixpence. "

Every Londoner knows the curious ornate house on the south side of Cheapside, near King Street, which bears the inscription, " Formerly the Mansion House. " To these premises, in 1824, came Thomas Tegg, who made a fortune by buying and selling books on an unprecedented scale, and with a keen nose for a bargain. The pioneer of " remainder " bookselling, he called himself " the broom that swept the booksellers' warehouses. " At No. 111 Cheapside, and then at No. 73, he held nightly book-sales, at which he appeared to be giving away books. In reality his broom had been at work among bankrupt stocks and on the choked shelves of the West End publishers. People flocked from all corners of London to Tegg's, to buy books at one-sixth or one-seventh of the published price, or merely to see them

sold. He acquired from Murray the old stock of the "Family Library" for something like £8000. There were more than 150,000 volumes in this parcel, and he bought them at a shilling each, and reissued them at double the price. He even made a good profit out of the purchase of 50,000 volumes of Valpy's "Delphin Classics." In the period of commercial depression which befell London in 1826, Tegg bought the most popular of Scott's novels at fourpence each. He also purchased the copyrights of Hone's "Every-Day Book" and "Table Book," and republishing them in weekly parts cleared a huge profit. He gave Hone £500 to complete the "Year Book," but this was less successful.

Besides remarketing old book stock, Tegg issued innumerable reprints, apparently with small regard for the rights of authors. When Talfourd's Copyright Bill was before the House of Commons in 1839, Thomas Carlyle presented to the House of Commons his own petition that the Bill might pass. The last paragraph of this manifesto ran: "May it, therefore, please your Honourable House to protect him . . . and (by passing your Copyright Bill) forbid all Thomas Teggs, and other extraneous persons, entirely unconcerned in this adventure of his, to steal from him his small winnings, for a space of sixty years at shortest. After sixty years, unless your Honourable House provide otherwise, they may begin to steal." A less distinguished writer said of Tegg: "He lives on the ruin of others, though that is no fault or affair of his. He lives on the ruin of publishers; he lives on the ruin of poor authors also; their losses are his gains; their unfortunate speculations—for a great many authors are foolish enough nowadays to publish their works on their own account—are frequently

those which turn out most profitable for him." Tegg flourished exceedingly, in spite of clamour and evil-speaking, and in the end purchased a country house at Norwood, where he promised himself the enjoyment of a large garden, though he scarcely knew a rose from a rhododendron. It is said that the character of Timothy Twigg, in Hood's novel "Tylney Hall," was drawn from the Cheapside bookseller, who died in 1845.

To the seeing eye Cheapside still offers hints of its old character, and many a detail of antiquity. No house in it can be older than the one numbered 37, at the corner of Friday Street, whose front is still adorned by the Chained Swan, taken from the Bohun badge of Henry IV. The same device may be seen over the brass of Eleanor de Bohun, Duchess of Gloucester, in Westminster Abbey. This house certainly goes back to the rebuilding of the City after the Great Fire, but there is a tradition (not discouraged by the late Mr. Loftie) that it is the part of a building of much older date. It is said that the Fire spared this fragment, and that its ravages can be traced on some of the beams. Cheapside Cross stood nearly opposite this house. Another object in Cheapside which no topographer is permitted to ignore is the Wood Street plane-tree. But I name it only to dispute its popular association with Wordsworth's "Reverie of Poor Susan." For the thrush of the poem was caged, no tree is mentioned, and it is certain that the Wood Street plane was not growing in Cheapside in 1797, the date of the poem.

There is perhaps not one Londoner in a hundred thousand—cabmen included—who would not be willing to make oath that Poultry is the last street in the great line between Charing Cross and the Bank.



But this is not so. Mansion House Street concludes the series, and the name is displayed in the ordinary manner. Mansion House Street is an integral part of Heine's "radial artery," and it is the most forgotten street in London. So forgotten that the point of a famous and favourite City ballad depends on this forgetfulness. Yet at ward meetings, and places where they sing, "The Lord Mayor's Coachman" will still be called for, and its exposition of London street nomenclature will be accepted with nods of assenting sagacity. John undertook to drive his Lordship from the Mansion House to Buckingham Palace without going through a single street. He accomplished this by taking him through Poultry, Cheapside, St. Paul's, Ludgate Hill, Old Bailey, Holborn, Drury Lane, Long Acre, St. Martin's Lane, Trafalgar Square, Pall Mall, and the Park.

But they both forgot Mansion House Street. It was a New Zealander who showed me that John had lost his wager before he had well started to win it. Many things hidden from the wise and prudent Cockney are revealed to our Overseas babes, and I doubt not that one of these will yet guide my tardy steps into the church, also hereby, of St. Stephen's, Walbrook. He will tell me that this church by Wren, which the average Londoner never sees, is a miniature St. Paul's, exquisite in proportion and miniaturely grand. According to some good judges, he will be right. In return, I shall relate to him the grotesque compliment paid in this church, and afterwards cancelled, to that imposing "blue," Mrs. Catharine Macaulay, the author of a "History of England" whose appearance in the Charing Cross Road would now cause consternation among the booksellers. Her clerical admirer, the Rector of St. Stephen's who lived very comfortably at

Bath, placed a white marble statue of the lady within the altar-rails during her lifetime, where she dominated the sanctuary as the Muse of History with a pen in her hand and leaning on the substantial volumes of her own work. He afterwards removed it, some say at the imperative desire of his bishop, others because the lady chose a second husband who did not live at Bath. The statue was returned to its sculptor, Moore, "with full permission to do whatever he pleased with it," but what he did with it is not history.

We are now in the City's maelstrom, and by all the rules I ought to detain the reader with ejaculation and reflection. Instead, let us cross to Lombard Street. Or if you rebel, or I repent, let it be to remember that Richard Jefferies, standing and pondering on that apex of pavement which is occupied by the statue of Wellington, revolved these thoughts: "Burning in the sky, the sun shines as it shone on me in the solitary valley, as it burned on when the earliest cave of India was carved. Above the indistinguishable roar of the many feet I feel the presence of the sun, of the immense forces of the universe, and beyond these the sense of the eternal now, of the immortal. Full well aware that all has failed, yet, side by side with the sadness of that knowledge, there lives on in me an unquenchable belief, thought burning like the sun, that there is yet something to be found, something real, something to give each separate personality sunshine and flowers in its own existence now. Something to shape this million-handed labour to an end and outcome, leaving accumulated sunshine and flowers to those who shall succeed. It must be dragged forth by might of thought from the immense forces of the universe."

The name of Lombard Street has gone round the

world ; it might be Esperanto for wealth. "All Lombard Street to a China orange" is a periphrasis for magnificent odds. In Arthur Murphy's comedy, "The Citizen," first played in 1763, this phrase occurs in a different form. Young George Philpot, proposing to drive Corinna to Epsom on the next Sunday, and boasting that he is as good a four-in-hand coachman as any in England, says : "There we go scrambling together ; reach Epsom in an hour and forty-three minutes : all Lombard Street to an egg-shell we do." There are companion phrases. In "Love's Labour's Lost" we have Biron laying Costard his "hat to a halfpenny" ; in "Richard II" the unhappy Queen exclaims : "My wretchedness to a row of pins," and, earlier than Shakespeare, in "Gammer Gurton's Needle" : "my cap to a crown."

Why a China orange ? This fruit, unknown to Covent Garden, was apparently poor eating. Some have seen in its selection a reference to the Levantine Jews, who wore yellow turbans, but then some people see Jews as trees walking. Bacon, in his essay on Usury, says : "They say that Usurers should have Orange-tawney bonnets, because they doe Judaize." As the street took its proverb from the luckless Jews, so it took its name from the Lombards, who succeeded them. It was not thought permissible to draw the teeth of Lombards, who were only ousted when Sir Richard Gresham, father of the greater Sir Thomas, came forward with a "disinterested device to take up all the money in Lombard Street." The Lombards melted away, and left us the beautiful word "bankrupt" a corruption of *bancarotta*, a broken bench. In Florence an insolvent trader had his bench or money-changing table broken. It is the man who is now said to suffer that fate.

The site of the business house of Sir Thomas Gresham, founder of the Royal Exchange, is now covered by Martin's bank. Gresham's original sign of the Grasshopper, made of brass, was long preserved here, but it vanished more than a hundred years ago. Mr. John Biddulph Martin is careful to explain the loss of his valuable relic. "The disappearance of the sign is not attributable to any want of reverence on the part of its owners, but to the dishonesty of the workmen who rebuilt the house in 1794-5. It is said that it was carefully put away during the rebuilding, but was not forthcoming at the completion of the works." A replica of the sign now glints over the door.

In Lombard Street, in a house on the present branch post-office, Sir Robert Viner conducted his dealings with Charles II. Here he entertained the King at his Mayoralty banquet. But he became so maudlin loyal that Charles made an excuse to depart, and before the company realized his action he was making for his coach. Viner, who was beyond abashment, rushed after his Sovereign, caught him by the hand, and with a vehement oath exclaimed: "Sir, you shall stay and take t'other bottle." And he who never said a foolish thing or did a wise one, trolled the line of an old song, "He that's drunk is as great as a king," and returned to the table. The oddest story of a London statue is associated with Viner. At the west end of Lombard Street, on the site of the present Mansion House, was the Stocks Market for the sale of meat and fish, and here he was determined to plant the royal effigy. Being in a hurry, or combining thrift with enthusiasm, he used for the purpose a statue which he had picked up cheap at Leghorn, a work in white marble representing John Sobieski, the King of Poland, in the act of trampling on a Turk. He had the figure of the Pole

refashioned till it became that of Charles of England, while the wretched Turk was rechiselled into Oliver Cromwell. The chaste result was unveiled on Charles's birthday, 29 May, 1672, and it adorned the Stocks Market until it was taken down in 1736, when the Mansion House was built. It lay as lumber in an inn-yard until 1779, when the Corporation presented it to one of Sir Robert's descendants. The remodelling of the statue had been so carelessly done that Cromwell wore a turban to the last. Viner, who died a ruined man, but at Windsor Castle, was buried in the Church of St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street. His mansion became London's first General Post Office in 1705, and was afterwards known as the Mail Coach Office. It is now represented by the Lombard Street branch post-office.

The sites of the great old banks in Lombard Street can be identified. Thus, the house No. 69 stands on the site of the gold smithery and bank of Alderman Edward Backwell, who had both Oliver Cromwell and Charles II as his clients. His books, still in existence, show that he managed the accounts of Charles's Queen, of Queen Henrietta Maria, and of Prince Rupert, Henry Cromwell, James Duke of Monmouth, the Countess of Castlemaine, Samuel Pepys, and many other notabilities.

There is no street in London in which the records of sites are more complete than in Lombard Street. Consequently it was possible nine years ago, during the festivities of the Coronation of Edward VII, to adorn the street with many of its ancient signs. Twenty-three of these were hung in their proper places, and a larger number could have been correctly placed. Four or five are permanently displayed, with the happiest effect.



In 1830 Messrs. Smith, Payne, and Smiths erected premises at No. 1 Lombard Street, the foundation-stone being laid by the youngest partner, and the following prayer used: "I invoke the Almighty Disposer of all events (without whose sanction no human exertions can avail) to look down with favour and protection on this our undertaking, to give permanence to this building ; and to maintain the prosperity of the family connected with it, so long as they shall continue their affairs with fidelity, and industry, and with honour, and no longer." It was on this bank that the publishing house of Longmans drew the cheque for £10,000 in favour of Lord Macaulay in payment for his "History of England."

An instructive portrait is drawn by Mr. Hilton Price of Mr. Fuller, an early partner in the bank of Fuller, Banbury & Co., of No. 77 Lombard Street. He belonged to that "prim class of bankers, well known in the last century, who were hardly ever absent from their desk in the shop, and who always slept over the bank. He was a careful, economical man who always had his washing done at home. One day every week, at noon, a pint of beer was brought in and placed at the foot of the stairs for the washerwoman, washing-day being always known in the City by this circumstance. Once, however, this pint became a pot. News of the unheard-of innovation quickly spread, and caused quite a sensation in Lombard Street and Cornhill. Indeed, an old customer called on him to remonstrate upon his extravagance, telling him that, although he had had great satisfaction in keeping his accounts with him till then, he now hardly considered him fit to take charge of other people's money, since he did not know how to take care of his own." I have little doubt that this banker was the "William Fuller,



Esq., banker, of Lombard Street," of whom I find a singularly unkind obituary notice in the "Annual Register" of 1800—a notice which, in these days, would precipitate an action for libel. He is charged with having exercised "the most penurious economy," and with permitting the pleasure of money-getting to "reign unrivalled in his soul." The writer has to admit, however, that he founded twelve almshouses in Hoxton. The interesting statement is made that after his death the remains of the old dead banker lay in state in the banking-house parlour in Lombard Street, and here we realize perfectly the changes which time has brought to the City.

Lombard Street has other than banking associations. In its Plough Court was born Alexander Pope. The same house was afterwards occupied by William Allen, the Quaker chemist and philanthropist. Pope's father, a linen merchant, retired to the country at the age of forty-six, when his brilliant but crook-backed boy was only twelve years of age. Of Pope's boyhood in Lombard Street nothing is known, yet I think one may reasonably find a trace of it in his mocking verses, "To Mr. John Moore, Author of the Celebrated Worm Powder." Moore was a quack doctor living in Abchurch Lane, which leads from Lombard Street into Cannon Street. His "learned Friend of Abchurch Lane," Pope calls him. "John Moore's Worm Powders" were very extensively advertised in the newspapers, with testimonials written in plainer language than would be tolerated to-day. Pope asks Moore to remember that "all humankind are worms."

O Learned Friend of Abchurch Lane,  
 Who sett'st our entrails free ;  
 Vain is thy art, thy powder vain,  
 Since worm shall eat e'en thee.

When Moore died in 1737 the "Gentleman's Magazine" blandly remarked that he would now "verify Mr. Pope's witty observation"—in the last quoted line. Other times, other taste.

In Abchurch Lane Londoners were introduced to French cookery. Here was Pontack's. This *restaurateur* was the son of Arnaude de Pontac, president of the parliament of Bordeaux, and when he set up his French eating-house in Abchurch Lane he named it the "Pontac Head," after his respected parent, from whose vineyards he obtained the excellent claret for which he charged Jonathan Swift seven shillings a bottle. Pontack's became the fashion, and the Royal Society dined there annually for many years. The host was a man of many parts, and Evelyn gives us his portrait. "I think I may truly say of him, what was not so truly said of St. Paul, that much learning had made him mad. He had studied well in philosophy, but chiefly the rabbins, and was exceedingly addicted to cabalistic fancies, an eternal babbler, and half-distracted by reading abundance of the extravagant Eastern Jews. He spoke all languages, was very rich, had a handsome personage, and was well-bred, about forty-five years of age." This Crichton had mentality left for the making of the best ragouts and sauces in London. In Abchurch Lane he would hand round such a bill of fare as the following : " Bird's-nest soup from China ; a ragout of fatted snails ; bantam pig but one day old stuffed with hard row and ambergris ; French peas stewed in gravy with cheese and garlick ; an incomparable tart of frogs and forced meat ; cod, with shrimp sauce ; chickens *en surprise*, not two hours from the shell"—and much else *en surprise*. During the South Sea Bubble stockbrokers came to Pontack's in droves, but when it burst they returned to the chop-

houses, and "the Jews and directors no longer boiled Westphalia hams in champagne and Burgundy." The City was always very like itself.

Pontack's successor was an Englishwoman, whose charms and abilities were acquired in marriage by a Lombard Street banker. To-day the finest old chop-houses in London draw their clients into the network of lanes and courts between Lombard Street and Cornhill. Here are Simpson's, Thomas's (at Mr. Pickwick's "George and Vulture") and Baker's in Change Alley, close to Lombard Street. The two bow-windows of Baker's form an antique frame to a heartsome vision of pewters, good plain food, and snug boxes.

The many inlets to this curious region are easily missed, and only on the spot can the mysteries of Pope's Head Alley, Change Alley, Cowper's Court, Birchin Lane, Ball Court, and St. Michael's Alley be studied. Even these have their cunning little off-shoots. In Birchin Lane you discover Bengal Court and Castle Court, and there are other complications. You may have wondered where the bank messengers and doorkeepers of the City obtain their gold-laced hats. In Castle Court there is a small shop that seems to sell nothing but these glorious head-pieces. It is startling, in Cowper's Court, suddenly to be confronted by the words,

### THE JERUSALEM,

cut handsomely over the entrance to the offices of the South British Insurance Company. This was once the daily resort of merchants trading to the East Indies, China, and Australia. The name Castle Court is perhaps connected with the sign of the "Ship and Castle," borne as early as 1716 by a Cornhill tavern.

In that year, on Lord Mayor's Day, a Frenchman exhibited a "sun kitchen" on the roof of this tavern in the presence of many City gentlemen. He roasted a fowl and prepared tea and coffee by using the sun's heat as reflected from a combination of "about a hundred small looking or convex glasses."

In St. Michael's Alley the Jamaica Tavern still represents the old Jamaica Coffee-house, the first house in London in which coffee was publicly drunk. An entire chapter, and a long one, might be written about these old mercantile haunts. The story of the South Sea Bubble centres in Change Alley and in the vanished Garraway's Coffee-house. The whole mercantility and gossip of the City in the early part of the eighteenth century seems to centre here and in its fellow financial coffee-house, "Jonathan's," also in Change Alley. It was over the door of the New Jonathan's Coffee-house that the words "The Stock Exchange" were first publicly inscribed and seen in London.

Lucky Corner, that wonderful financial headland from which the clerks of the Liverpool, London, and Globe Insurance office now look on the City's maelstrom, was also known as Pidding's Corner. This Pidding was a lottery agent. But it was Tom Bish who gave the Corner its first name. Bish first emerged from obscurity in the State lottery of 1796. He established himself at No. 4 Cornhill in 1798, and from that year until the last lottery of 1826 he was the greatest advertising broker in the country. His handbills went everywhere, recording the successes of his clients and inviting speculation. Like his neighbour, Samuel Birch the confectioner, he frequently burst into poetry, but unlike the alderman he wrote it to push his business.

For nearly twenty years Bish exhausted the ingenuities of advertising, and finally, when the last of all the lotteries was announced to take place on 18 October, 1826, he issued a manifesto, in which, more in anger than sorrow, he wrote :—

“Mr. Pitt, whose ability in matters of financial arrangements few will question, and whose morality was proverbial, would not, I am bold to say, have yielded to an outcry against a tax, the continuing of which would have enabled him to let the labourer drink his humble beverage at a reduced price, or the industrious artisan to pursue his occupation by a cheaper light.

“But we live in other times—in the age of improvement !

“To stake patrimonial estates at hazard or *écarté*, in the purlieu of St. James’s, is merely *amusement*, but to purchase a ticket in the Lottery, by which a man may gain an estate at a trifling risk,—is—immoral ! Nay, within a few hours of the time I write, were not many of our nobility and senators, some of whom, I dare say, voted against Lotteries, assembled betting thousands upon a *horse-race* ?”

Tom’s tears availed not, and the Cornhill lottery contractors—Bish, Martin, Hazard, and the rest—prepared to put up their shutters. But they meant to die fighting, and incredible efforts were made in the summer of 1826 to make the last of all the lotteries a success. Cars, banners, and music were sent round the town proclaiming the approaching death of the Lottery, and the last chance of a fortune. The effect, however, was funereal, and the gigantic octagonal car was everywhere only laughed at and pelted with stones and oyster-shells. The Lottery expired on the appointed date in Cooper’s Hall, Basinghall Street, and London did not grieve.



Guy the bookseller and founder of Guy's Hospital kept his shop at Lucky Corner—the junction of Lombard Street and Cornhill. Here he sold the first Bibles printed at Oxford, and published school-books and theological works. He had other ways, it may be guessed, of growing rich. One of them is unpleasantly set forth by Maitland: "England being engaged in an expensive war against France, the poor seamen on board the Royal Navy for many years, instead of money, received tickets for their pay, which these necessitous but very useful men were obliged to dispose of at thirty, forty, and sometimes fifty in the hundred discount. Mr. Guy, discovering the sweets of this traffic, became an early dealer therein."

Mr. Guy also speculated with great shrewdness, and was one of the few men who bought and sold South Sea stock at the right time. He gathered money and spent little. He dined on his shop-counter, spreading a newspaper for table-cloth. Such was the man who founded one of the noblest of London charities. A censorious world tries to account for the anomaly, and the story that found favour was this: Guy fell in love with his maid-servant, and in view of this event he had so far expanded his soul as to order that the pavement in front of his shop should be repaired as far as a particular stone which he marked. The girl, while her master was out, watched the paviers at work, and observing a broken place she asked them not to miss it. They replied that Mr. Guy had ordered them to go no farther than the marked stone. "Well," she replied, "mend it; tell him I bade you, and I know he will not be angry." But the poor girl had miscalculated. Mr. Guy was so angry that he broke off his engagement, renounced all idea of marrying, and took to founding hospitals and alms-



houses. He died at the age of eighty, after giving immense sums to charity and endowing his great hospital with more than £200,000.

King William Street is modern, and its only charm is its relation to the Monument, but that is much. I have an old kindness for the Monument region, to which one comes with uplifted eye and a moved heart across London Bridge. From the bridge one can see the City; other approaches give vista, here is panorama. The air is laden with the scents of produce. In Mincing Lane the hot odour of roasted sample coffee is seldom absent; the air of Eastcheap is haunted by tea scents; in St. Mary-at-Hill you descend through pepper to fish; and in Lower Thames Street the emanations of drysaltery mingle with oranges and something only to be called otto of steamboat.

All these scents and sneezes must have been familiar to the inhabitants of Todgers's commercial boarding-house under the Monument, though for them there was a special intimation of bruised oranges in the cellars of their wonderful labyrinth. The zest and detail of that description in the ninth chapter of "Martin Chuzzlewit" are unusual, even in Dickens. His description of Todgers's—its mere situation and externals—fill four and a half columns in the edition of the novel before me. No writer dare now attempt such a thing. Yet we become dead to the rest of the world as the tortuous, intensive, fantastic, and evocative lines flow on. Dickens had intended to open "Martin Chuzzlewit" in the lantern of a lighthouse—to be precise, in the Longships, off Land's End. It is odd, then, that the first deep-bitten passage in the story should be this description of a labyrinth of dark lanes and blind alleys close to the Monument.

"You couldn't walk about in Todgers's neighbourhood as you could in any other neighbourhood. You groped your way for an hour between lanes and byways and courtyards and passages, and never once emerged upon anything that might reasonably be called a street. A kind of resigned distraction came over the stranger as he trod those devious mazes, and, giving himself up for lost, went in and out and round about and quietly turned back again when he came to a dead wall or was stopped by an iron railing, and felt that the means of escape might possibly present themselves in their own good time, but that to anticipate them was hopeless. Instances were known of people who, being asked to dine at Todgers's, had travelled round and round it for a weary time, with its very chimney-pots in view; and finding it, at last, impossible of attainment, had gone home again with a gentle melancholy on their spirits, tranquil and uncomplaining."

The Todgers neighbourhood is fixed by one graphic touch. On the roof of the boarding-house there was a sort of terrace, with old posts and fragments of clothes-lines, and "two or three tea-chests, full of earth, with forgotten plants in them, like old walking-sticks." This observatory commanded a view of chaotic roofs, across which, on a bright day, *fell the shadow of the Monument*; "and turning round, the tall original was close behind you, with every hair erect upon his golden head, as if the doings of the city frightened him." Fragments of the real Todgersdon survive in Botolph Alley, running between Love Lane and Botolph Lane. These two lanes, with Pudding Lane and St. Mary Hill, are the arteries, if they can be called such, of the dense precinct which "hemmed Todgers's round, and hustled it, and crushed it, and



### PUDDING LANE AND THE MONUMENT

THE EXISTENCE, EVEN FIFTY YEARS AGO, OF A TODGERS BOARDING-HOUSE UNDER THE MONUMENT, IN THAT LAIR OF CRANES, CARTS, FISH-SMELLS, OATHS AND COLLISIONS IS SCARCELY CREDIBLE (P. 305)



stuck its brick-and-mortar into it, and kept the air from it, and stood perpetually between it and the light." Love Lane in its best hours reminds one of the fishing quarter of Lowestoft. Its cavernous cellars and unexpected lofts, its tanks of live eels, its dripping boxes that were yesterday in Grimsby and Blyth, its baskets of ice glistening on the heads of young Atlases, give one a sense of the sea which is completed by the wave-like slosh of besoms on asphalt floors.

The way in which London hugs and secretes the character of an old neighbourhood—not really parting with its features when the farewells are said—is known to her lovers. You would say that the existence, even fifty years ago, of a Todgers boarding-house under the Monument, in that lair of cranes, carts, fish-smells, oaths, and collisions, is scarcely credible. Yet to-day you have only to enter Swan Lane, hard by, to find a row of such houses of the Todgers type, shuttered, curtained, serene in their obscure decency.

It is not necessary, but I have the inclination to believe that Dickens knew this neighbourhood in some specially intimate way. It is deeply etched in another of his early novels, for it was to a house by the river-side that Newman Noggs inducted Mrs. Nickleby and Kate when they came under the power of Ralph Nickleby. Their appointed home was "a large old dingy house in Thames Street, the doors and windows of which were so bespattered with mud, that it would have appeared to have been uninhabited for years. . . . Old and gloomy, and black, in truth it was, and sullen and dark were the rooms, once so bustling with life and enterprise. There was a wharf behind opening on the Thames. An empty dog-kennel, some bones of animals, fragments of iron hoops, and staves of old casks, lay strewn about, but

no life was stirring here. It was a picture of cold, silent decay."

I can indulge the fancy that the true spring, the *primum mobile*, of Dickens's inspiration was place, not personality; that his first relationship with the material of his art was with streets, houses, and precincts, which communicated to him a sense of the human personalities they had absorbed, and awoke a responsive impulse to restore to them the warmth and quality of men and women. There is an intimacy between his characters and the places from which they emerge that is unexampled in any other novelist. Did he, in a manner, evoke characters from environments? It may be the illusion of his art, but I can imagine that he materialized Ralph Nickleby from the very aura of Golden Square, that he had to think of Goswell Street before he could shape his own Pickwick (as distinct from Chapman and Hall's) and that in the Monument labyrinth he actually groped after Jenkins. Quilp is the very emanation of rascally foreshores and rotting wharves. There is a story of Dickens's boyhood to which I give far more importance than did Forster, at the risk of seeming fanciful. As a boy in Bayham Street he read George Colman's "Broad Grins." The book, says Forster, "seized his fancy very much, and he was so impressed by its description of Covent Garden in the piece called the 'Elder Brother' that he stole down to the market by himself to compare it with the book. He remembered, as he said in telling me this, *snuffing up the flavour of the faded cabbage-leaves, as if it were the very breath of comic fiction.*" On this Forster remarks, "Nor was he far wrong, as comic fiction then, and for some time after, was; it was reserved for himself to give sweeter and fresher breath to it." It was, but the comment seems inadequate.



We are on ground where no genius is required to evoke spirit from matter. What overcoming langsynes of London, "felt in the blood and felt along the heart," abide in the shadows of London Bridge! Millions of children who never saw London have helped to build up London Bridge. How old the song is, and how it went originally, are points on which the learned do not agree, but it has been conjectured that the first line, "London Bridge is broken down," may go back to the terrible "battle of the bridge" fought between the Danish occupiers of London and King Olaf of Norway. An Icelandic scald of the thirteenth century begins the ballad of the fight thus :—

London Bridge is broken down,  
 Gold is won, and bright renown;  
     Shields resounding,  
     War horns sounding,  
 Hildur shooting in the din;  
     Arrows singing,  
     Mail-coats ringing,  
 Odin makes our Olaf win.

More prosaically the song has been traced to a supposed breakdown of the Bridge, when London Bridge lying in ruins, the office of Bridge Master was vacant, and his power over the River Lea—for it is doubtless that river which is celebrated in the refrain "Dance o'er my Lady Lea"—was for a while at an end. All this is uncertain, but the song has been a nursery-rhyme for centuries. A correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine" of September, 1823, related that in childhood he heard it warbled by a lady who was born in the reign of Charles II. Again, "London Bridge is *Fallen* Down" is declared to be an old Christmas carol belonging especially to

Newcastle-on-Tyne, whose old stone bridge bore a singular resemblance on a small scale to London Bridge. It began :—

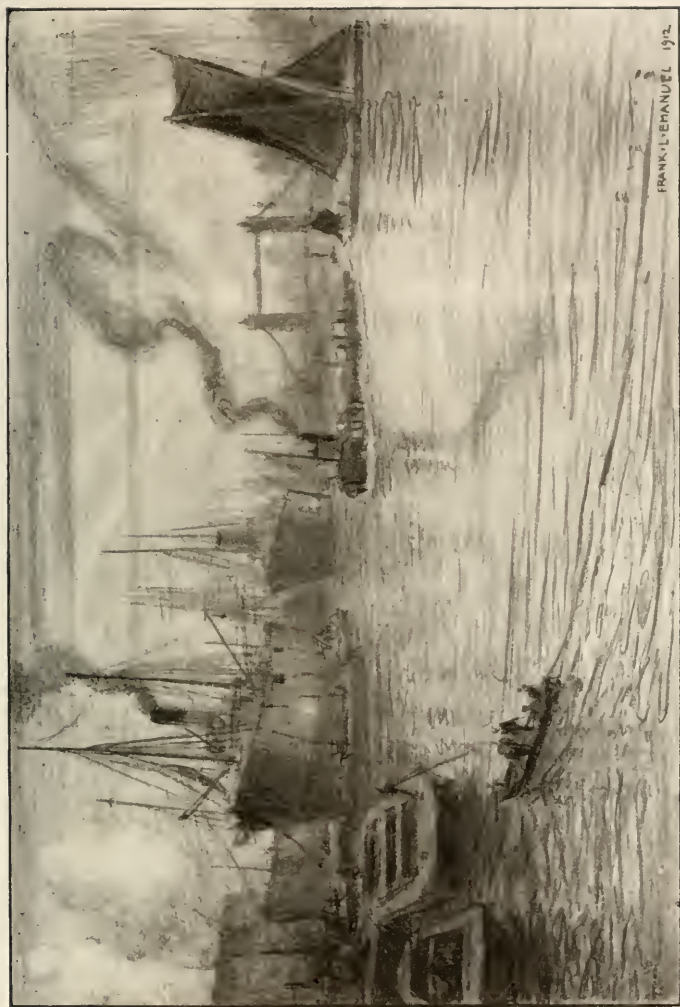
Dame, get up and bake your pies,  
On Christmas Day in the morning,

to which she answers mournfully—

London Bridge is fallen down,  
On Christmas Day in the morning,

the inference being that until the Bridge was rebuilt on the Thames, she could not—on account of some telepathic obstruction—make pastry on the Tyne.

The proverbial philosophy of London Bridge is full of interest. The saying that the bridge is “built upon wool-packs refers to the impost on wool which helped to defray its cost. A similar basis, in fact, exists for the saying that London Bridge was made for wise men to go over and fools to go under. This harks us back to the danger which for centuries beset the “shooting” of the bridge by small boats and wherries. The passage of the water was obstructed, not only by the narrowness of the arches, but by corn-mills and water-works built in some of the openings. The other arches were narrow; at flood-tide passengers going down the river would often disembark rather than take the risk of the rapids under the bridge. Dr. Johnson and Boswell did this on 30 July, 1763, when they had hired a sculler at the Temple Stairs for an excursion to Greenwich. Noting the incident, John Wilson Croker relates a personal experience. “I once had the honour of attending the Duke and Duchess of York on a party down the river, and we were about to land to allow the barge to shoot



THE WATER GATE OF LONDON

YONDER, IN REMOTE QUIETNESS, RISE THOSE SHAPES OF TOWER, MONUMENT, BRIDGE AND DOME WHICH ARE THE SYMBOLS  
OF THIS CITY THROUGH ALL THE WORLD (p. 312)



the bridge. The Duchess asked 'Why?' and being told that it was on account of the danger, positively refused to get out of the boat, and insisted on shooting, which we reluctantly did; but we shipped a good deal of water, and all got very wet, Her Royal Highness showing not the least alarm or regret." Many young Londoners, male and female, were of the same mind as the Duchess. Hence Canning's lines :—

"Shoot we the Bridge!"—the venturous boatmen cry—  
 "Shoot we the Bridge!"—the exulting fare reply.

with the result that—

Drench'd each smart garb, and clogg'd each struggling limb,  
 Far o'er the stream the Cockneys sink or swim.

Other old sayings about London Bridge are numerous :  
 "Take one of the heads on London Bridge, able  
 neither to speak nor breathe."—"It is impossible to  
 stop the tide at London Bridge."—"If London Bridge  
 had fewer eyes (i.e., fewer arches) it would see better."

London Bridge, too, is the traditional Pisgah from  
 which to view the Londoners; nor have railway  
 bridges, tunnels, and tubes deprived it of its morning  
 and evening supremacy. In all cities this is the  
 character of the bridge. There, between sky and  
 water, in the unwonted light, one sees faces

Praising, reviling,  
 Worst head and best head,  
 Past me defiling,  
 Never arrested,  
 Wanters, abounders,  
 March in gay mixture,  
 Men, my surrounds !  
 I am the fixture.

And it is on London Bridge, if anywhere, that we may seek for the synthetic London expression, the form and pressure of the town in the eyes and bearing of its children. The normal expression on the Londoner's face has been interpreted by Mrs. Meynell in one of her penetrating essays: "If there is a look of human eyes that tells of perpetual loneliness, so there is also the familiar look that is the sign of perpetual crowds. It is the London expression, and, in its way, the Paris expression. It is the quickly caught, though not interested, look, the dull but ready glance of those who do not know of their forfeited place apart; who have neither the open secret nor the close; no reserve, no need of refuge, no flight nor impulse of flight; no moods but what they may brave out in the street, no hope of news from solitary counsels."

This is admirably said, and the only qualification it can need is that it must not be applied to the whole Londoner, who is one man on London Bridge and more or less another man in the suburb. It is in the street that the Londoner puts on the outward signs of that inward attitude of defence against the calls which faces and incidents in the streets make on him. His "dull but ready glance" is that share of his unmiraculous loaves and fishes which experience has taught him that he can afford to give you among four million rivals. De Quincey thought that his visions, under opium, of innumerable human faces might have had their origin in his London life. We who do not eat opium, but are London-pent, must somehow conquer or evade that tyranny of the human face. Hence this quick, dull glance—quick with the quickness of the eye, but dull with the grudgings of a brain that would weary in an hour's sustained



alertness. On the other hand this wary retreat from alertness is itself a strain, and that is why the Londoner, who turns a fish-like eye on the mass of his fellow-townsmen, was easily persuaded that the lion on Northumberland House wagged its tail.

On London Bridge it is that London remembers the days of her youth while she gives thanks in her sweat that her natural force is not abated. The air is full of hum and jingle, yet the silence of the natural river is felt under the syrens and chains, and even while we see the oranges passing from boat to trolley the water bemuses us with the lapping light and grey tracts that Chaucer knew. And you wish to sense the long story of the haven, if you can do so without making speeches out of books, and if the savour of it will come to you in the warmth of the sun, in the rattle of the crane, or in the glint of a pigeon's wing when it swerves? . . . Ah, well! come and look at the Pool from Rotherhithe, where there is peace. There, opposite Wapping Old Stairs, among warehouse, cranes, masts, funnels, rigging, and Rotherhithe, there is a wooden gallery.

The little inn wears it like a girdle. It overhangs the water at high tide and the mud at low; the lighters huddle near it as if it were their friend. It is the eye of a slight promontory and looks over to the league-long wharves and warehouses which are Wapping and Shadwell and Stepney, but which, under the evening sky, are serene and poised as a forest.

A steamship is still unloading her cargo of crude sugar into Wapping. A lighter receives them from her high deck, and close to the warehouse another lighter is yielding its load to a crane that lowers its chain sixty feet. Always when you look a yellow package is rising to the little doorway on the top floor. It disappears.

The grain barge at our side is in the river, but not of it. It belongs to the canal, and those gaudy lozenges of colour on the uprights which support its longitudinal bridge, as long nearly as itself, are a quarter of a century behind Thames and Medway conventions. The grain barge has come across from the Regent's Canal Dock to the granaries, and it will soon be on another crawl to the West Country. I think that the barge wife, short, tubby, and tanned, and wearing a white apron and a sun-bonnet, likes the canal best. London's gate looms behind the sun-bonnet, and St. Paul's carries the imagination on, but London never disturbed this woman. She sits in the stern with her back to Babylon—a mighty knitter before the Lord.

Look at these Jersey and Cornwall schooners, hugging each other like sisters. There is something primitive about them—a lingering likeness to crafts that rotted about the time Redriff became Rotherhithe and Gulliver took ship in the "Antelope"—Captain William Pritchard—the very "Antelope," mayhap, that was afterwards wrecked off the Pellews under Captain Wilson. Wilson brought back his Prince Lee Boo to get civilization, but he got smallpox with it, and he lies there among the mariners under the old brick tower in the leafy churchyard.

Boys are bathing from Old Wapping Stairs.

How large and free, within the limits of an order too old to be felt, is all this by-play and leisure at the water-gate of London! And yonder, in remote quietness, rise those shapes of Tower, Monument, Bridge, and Dome that are the symbols of this city through all the world. If they lack the grace of collective motherhood, if they assimilate rather with the clouds than the streets, it is because London has attained to

dimensions in which her entity is lost in space, as her origin in time. Only in her sleep, in the suspension of all that "mighty heart," has a great poet envisaged the unity of London. Yet here, and at last, one has some illusion of the whole. Those white-fleshed boys, in whose veins the life-blood of London is continued—let us think that they are playing in the dusk of a maternal city, by a river whose image and tradition are in every heart. Let the Angel which redeems London from evil bless the lads, and let London's name be named on them, and the names that our fathers knew, and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.



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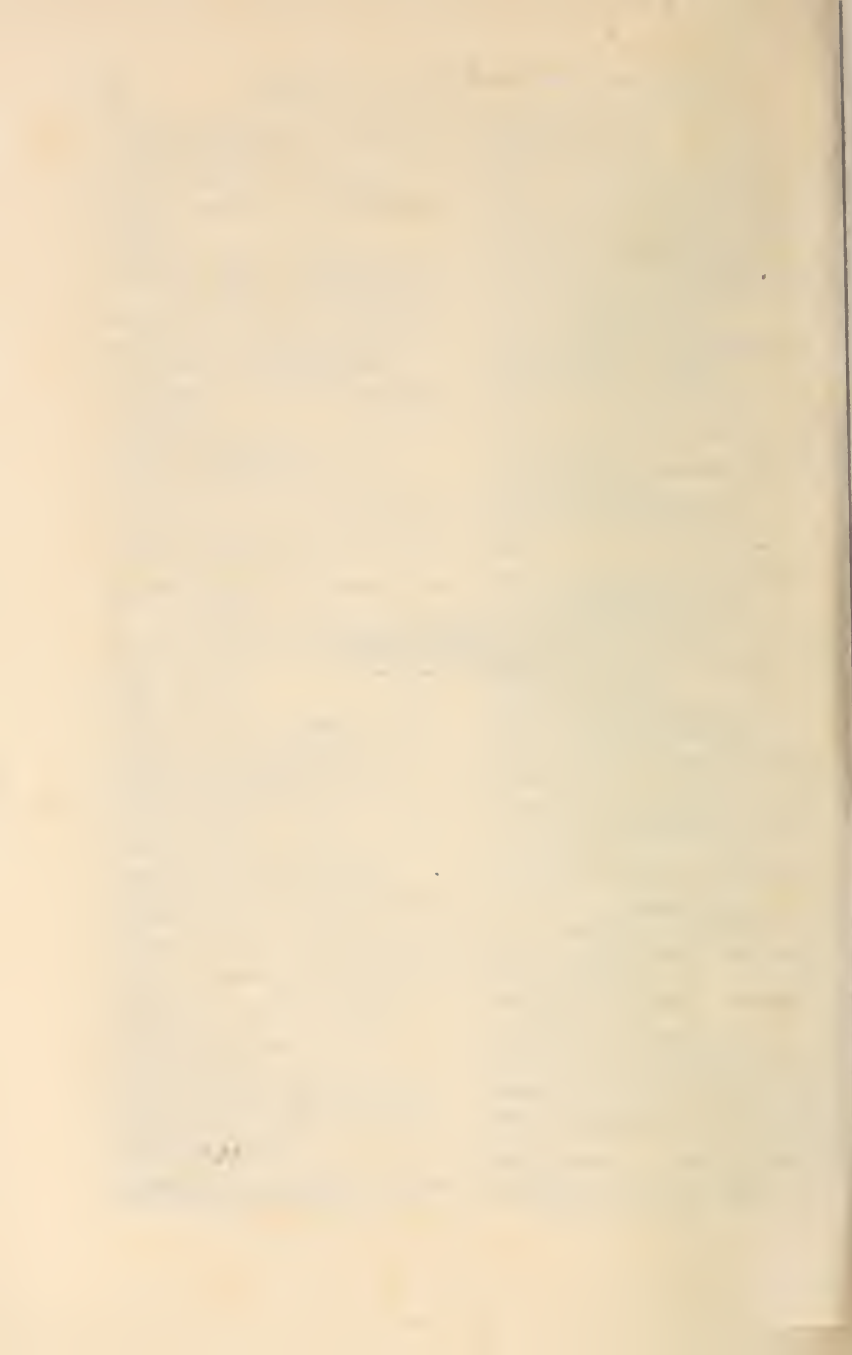
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## WILFRED WHITTEN

Wilfred Whitten, who has died in his seventy-ninth year, was known as "John o' London" to thousands of readers who had never heard his real name. For the kind of impersonal first-person journalism he practised a pseudonym was the nearest he could get to the anonymity he believed in. It was not only that he was really a modest man, but that he saw no reason for anybody needing his name to be proclaimed just because he had done a piece of work as honestly as it should be done. He could do the particular job he was called upon to do splendidly; for over forty years he was a master of the literary *causerie*, which he handled in a way to attract the general reader, for whom it was primarily intended, and to earn the respect of the scholarly critic. His reading in every variety of literature was enormous; he seemed to have no special studies; and he had his own varied experiences of life to keep his writings from becoming entirely bookish. There was no boisterous activity in his work, but it was alive with the quiet vigour of enthusiasm and good humour. Only an accident in the black-out a few weeks ago ended his popular essays in *John o' London's Weekly*, the journal he founded. His writings apart from journalism were few, but among them his edition of "J. T. Smith's Nollekens and his Times" and his book on "Daniel Defoe" in the Westminster Biographies are admirable studies.

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